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THE ALDINE EDITION OF THE BRITISH POETS

THE POEMS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL IV

828
C5
M2
v.4

THE POETICAL WORKS OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER

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Member of the Council of the Philological Society, Editor of "Specimens of Early English," &c., &c., &c.

WITH MEMOIR BY SIR HARRIS NICOLAS

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THE COURT OF LOVE.

WITH tymeros hert and tremlyng hand of drede,
Of cunning naked, bare of eloquence,
Unto the flour of poort in womanhede
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metres hath, ne floures of sentence;
Sauf that me list my writing to convey,
In that I can to please her hygh nobley.

The blosmes fresshe of Tullius garden soote
Present *hem* not, my matere for to borne:
Poemys of Virgile taken here no rote,
No crafte of Galfride may not here sojorne:
Why nam I cunning? O well may I morne,
For lak of science that I cannot write
Unto the princes of my life aright

No termys digne unto her excellence,
So is she sprong of noble stirpe and high:
A world of honoure and of reverence
There is in her, this wille I testifie.
Callyope, thowe sister wise and sly,

And thowe Mynerva, guyde me with thy grace,
That langage rude my mater not deface.

Thy suger dropes swete of Elicon
Distill in me, thowe gentle Muse, I pray;
And the, Melpomene, I calle anone,
Of ignoraunce the miste to chace away.;
And give me grace so for to write and sey,
That she, my lady, of her worthinesse,
Accepte in gree this litill short tretesse,

That is entitled thus, The Courte of Love.
And ye that bene metriciens me excuse,
I you beseche for Venus sake above;
For whate I mene in this ye nede not muse:
And yf so be my lady it refuse
For lak of ornat speche, I wold be woo,
That I presume to her to writen soo.

But myne entent and all my besy cure
Is for to write this tretesse, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Feithfull and kynde, sith first that she began
Me to accept in service as her man:
To her be all the pleasure of this boke,
That, when her like, she may it rede and loke.

When I was yong, at eighteen yere of age,
Lusty and light, desirous of plesaunce,
Approchyng on full sadde and ripe corage,
Love arted me to do myn observaunce
To his astate, and doon hym obeysaunce,
Commaundyng me the Courte of Love to see,
A lite beside the Mounte of Citharee,

There Citherea goddesse was and quene
Honowred highly for her majestie;
And eke her sonne, the myghty god, I wene,
Cupyde the blynde, that for his dignyté
A thousand lovers worship on *here* kne;
There was I bidde, in payn of deth, to pere,
By Mercury, the wynged messengere.

So than I wente be straunge and ferre contrees,
Enquiryng ay whate costes that *to* it drewe
The Courte of Love: and thiderward, as bees,
At last I se the peple gan pursue:
Anon me thoughte som wight was there that knewe
Where that the courte was holden, ferre or nye,
And aftir *hem* fulle faste I gan me hie.

Anone as I *hem* overtoke, I seide,
'Haile frendes! whider purpose ye to wende?'
'Forsothe,' quod one that aunswerede lich a mayde,
'To Loves Courte nowe goo we, gentill frend.'
'Where is that place,' quod I, 'my felowe hende?'
'At Citheron, sir,' seid he, 'withoute dowte,
'The Kyng of Love, and all his noble rowte,

'Dwellyng withynne a castell ryally.'
So than apace I jornede forth amonge,
And as he seide, so fond I there truly.
For I behelde the towres high and stronge,
And highe pynacles, large of hight and longe,
With plate of gold bespredde on every side,
And presious stones, the stone werke for to hide.

No saphir Ind, no rubé riche of price,
There lakkede thanne, nor emeraude so grene,

Bales Turkes, ne thing to my devise,
That may the castell maken for to shene:
All was as bright as sterres in wynter bene;
And Phebus shone, to make his pease agayn
For trespace doon to high estates tweyne,

Venus and Mars, the god and goddesse clere,
When he *hem* founde in armes cheyned faste:
Venus was than full sad of harte and chere.
But Phebus bemes, streight as is the maste,
Upon the castell gynith he to caste,
To please the lady, princesse of that place,
In sign he loketh aftir Loves grace.

For there nys god in Heven or Helle, iwis,
But he hath ben right soget unto Love;
Jove, Pluto, or whatesoever he is,
Ne creature in erth, or yet above;
Of thise the revers may no wight approve.
But furthermore, the castell to discrive,
Yet sawe I never none so large and high.

For unto Heven it streccheth, I suppose,
Withynne and oute depeynted wonderly,
With many a thousand daisyes, rede as rose,
And white also, this sawe I verely:
But whate tho deyses myghte do signifie,
Can I not telle, sauf that the quenes floure
Alceste yit was that kepte there her sojoure;

Which under Venus lady was and quene,
And Admete kyng and soverayn of that place,
To whom obeide the ladyes gode ninetene,

With many a thowsand other, bright of face.
And yonge men fele came forth with lusty pace,
And aged eke, *here* homage to dispose;
But whate thay were, I cowde not well disclose.

Yet nere and nere furth in I gan me dresse
Into an halle of noble apparayle,
With arras spred, and cloth of gold I gesse,
And other silke of esier availe:
Under the cloth of *here* estate saunz faile,
The kyng and quene ther sat, as I beheld:
It passed joye of Helisé the feld.

There saintes have *here* comyng and resort,
To seen the kyng so ryally beseen,
In purple clad, and eke the quene in sort:
And on *here* hedes sawe I crownes twayn,
With stones frett, so that it was no payne,
Withouten mete and drynke, to stand and see
The kinges honour and the ryaltie.

And for to trete of states with the kyng,
That bene of councell cheef, and with the quene,
The kyng had Daunger nere to hym standyng,
The Quene of Love, Disdeyne, and that was sene:
For by the feith I shall to God, I wene
Was never straunger *none* in her degree,
Than was the quene in castyng of her ye.

And as I stode perceyvyng her apart,
And eke the bemes shynyng of her yen,
Me thoughte thay were shapyn liche a darte,
Sherpe and persyng, smale and streight as line:
And all her here it shone as gold so fyne,

Disshivill, crispe, downe hyngyng at her bak
A yarde in length: and smoothly than I spake:—

'O brighte Regina, who made the so faire?
Who made thy colour vermelet and white?
Where woneth that god? howe fer above the eyre?
Grete was his crafte, and grete was his delite
Now marvel I nothing that ye do hight
The Quene of Love, and occupie the place
Of Citharé: nowe, swete lady! thi grace.'

In mewet spake I so that nought asterte
By no condicion, worde that myghte be harde;
But in myne inward thought I gan adverte,
And oft I seide 'My witte is dulle and harde:'
For with her bewtie, thus, God wot, I ferde
As doth the man i-ravisshed with sighte,
Whenne I beheld her cristall yen so brighte,

No respect havyng whatte was best to doon,
Till right anon, beholding here and there,
I spied a frend of myne, and that full sone
A gentilwoman, was the chamberer
Unto the queen, that hote, as ye shall here,
Philobone, that loved *wel* alle her life:
Whan she me sey, she led me furth as blyfe;

And me demaunded howe and in whate wise
I thider come, and whate myne erand was?
'To sene the courte,' quod I, 'and alle the guyse;
And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
And mercy aske for all my grete trespace,
That I none erst come to the Courte of Love:
Foryeve me this, ye goddes all above.'

'That is well seid,' quod Philobone, 'indede:
But were ye not assomoned to apere
By Mercurius, for that is all my drede:'
'Yis, gentill feire,' quod I, 'nowe am I here,
Ye, yit whate thowe, though that be true, my dere?'
'Of youre fre wille ye shuld have come unsent:
For ye dide not, I deme ye wille be shent.

'For ye that reigne in youth and lustýnesse,
Pampired with ease, and joyless in youre age,
Youre dewtie is, as ferre as I canne guesse,
To Loves Courte to dressen youre viage,
As sone as Nature maketh you so sage,
That ye may knowe a woman from a swan,
Or whanne youre fote is growen half a spanne.

'But sith that ye, be wilfulle necligence,
This eighteene yere have kepte youreself at large,
The gretter is youre trespace and offence,
And in youre nek you motte bere all the charge:
For better were ye ben withouten barge
Amydde *the* se in tempest and in rayne,
Than byden here, receyvyng woo and payne,

'That ordeyned is for suche as *hem* absente
Fro Loves Courte by yeres long and fele.
I ley my lyf ye shalle full sone repente;
For Love wille reyve youre coloure, lust, and hele:
Eke ye moste bayte on many an hevy mele:
No force, iwis, I stired you long agoone
To drawe to courte,' quod litell Philobon.

'Ye shalle well se howe rowhe and angry face
The Kyng of Love will shewe, when ye hym se:

By myne advyse knele downe and aske hym grace,
Eschewing perell and adversitee;
For welle I wot it wolle none other be,
Comforte is none, ne councell to youre ease;
Why wille ye thanne the Kyng of Love displese?'

'O mercy God,' quod Iche, 'I me repent,
Caytif and wrecche in hert, in wille and thought!
And aftir this shall be myne hole entent
To serve and please, howe dere that love be bought·
Yit sith I have myne owen penaunce isought,
With humble sprite shall I it receyve,
Though that the Kyng of Love my life bereyve.

'And though the fervent loves qualite
In me did never worche truly yit I
With all obeysaunce and humilité,
And benigne harte, shall serve hym till I dye:
And he that Lorde of myghtes, grete and high,
Right as hym lyste me chastice and correcte
And punysshe me, with trespace thus enfecte.'

Thise wordes seid, she caught me by the lap,
And ledde me furth intill a temple round,
Both large and wyde: and as my blessed hap
And gode aventure was, right sone I founde
A tabernacle reised from the grounde,
Where Venus sat, and Cupide by her side,
Yit half for drede I gan my visage hide.

And eft agayn I loked and beheld,
Seyng full sundry peple in the place,
And myster folke, and som that myght not welde
Here lymmes wele, me thought a wounder case;

The temple shone with wyndowes all of glasse,
Bright as the day, with many a feire ymage;
And there I sey the freshe quene of Cartage,

Dydo, that brent her bewtie for the love
Of fals Eneas; and the weymyntyng
Of hir Anelida, true as turtill dove,
To Arcite fals: and there was in peyntyng
Of many a prince, and many a doughty kyng,
Whose marterdom was shewed aboute the walles;
And howe that feale for love hadde suffred falles.

But sore I was abasshed and stonyed
Of all thoo folke that there were in that tide;
And than I askede where thay hade woned:
'In dyvers courtes,' quod she, 'here beside.'
In sondry clothing, mantil-wise full wide,
They were arrayed, and did *here* sacrifice
Unto the god and goddesse in *here* guyse.

'*Lo*! yonder folk,' quoth she, 'that knele in blewe,
Thay were the coloure ay and ever shalle,
In signe thay were and ever wille be true
Withouten chaunge: and soothly yonder alle
That ben in blak, and mornyng cry and calle
Unto the goddes, for *here* loves bene
Som ferre, som dede, som all to-sherpe and kene.'

'Ye than,' quod I, 'whate done thise prestes here,
Nonnes and hermytes, freres, and alle thoo
That sit in white, in russet, and in grene?
Forsoth,' quod she, 'thay waylen of *here* woo.'
'O mercy lord! may thay so come and goo

Frely to court and have suche libertie?'
'Ye men of eche condicion and degree,

'And women eke: for truly there is none
Excepcion made, ne never was ne may:
This courte is ope and fre for everychone,
The Kyng of Love he wille nat say *hem* nay:
He takith all, in poore or riche arraye,
That mekely sewe unto his excellence
With all *here* harte and all *here* reverence.'

And, walkyng thus aboute with Philobone,
I se where come a messengere in hie
Streight from the kyng, which let commaunde anon,
Throughoute the courte to make an ho and crye:
"*Alle* newe come folke abide! and wote ye whye?
The kynges luste is for to seen youe sone;
Come nere, let se! his wille mote nede be done.'

Than gan I me presente tofore the kyng,
Tremelyng for fere, with visage pale of hewe,
And many a lover with me was knelyng,
Abasshed sore, till unto the tyme thay knewe
The sentence yove of his entent full trewe:
And at the laste the kyng hath me beholde
With sterne visage, and seid, 'Whate doth this olde,

'Thus ferre istope in yeres, come so late
Unto the courte?' 'Forsoth, my liege,' quod I,
'An hundred tyme I have ben at the gate
Afore this time, yet coude I never espye
Of myne acqueyntaunce eny with myne ye;
And shamefastnes away me gane to chace;
But nowe I me submytte unto your grace.'

'Well! all is perdoned, with condicion
That thowe be trewe from hensforth to thy myght,
And serven Love in thyne entencion:
Swere this, and thanne, as fer as it is right,
Thowe shalte have grace here in my quenes sight.'
'Yis, by the feith I owe youre crowne, I swere,
Though Deth therfore me thirlith with his spere.'

And whan the kyng had sene us everychone,
He let commaunde an officer in hie
To take oure feith, and shewe us, one by one
The statutis of the courte full besyly:
Anon the boke was leide before her ye,
To rede and se whate thyng we most observe
In Loves Courte, till that we dye and sterve.

And for that I was lettred, there I redde
The statutis hole of Loves Courte and halle:
The firste statute that on the boke was spred,
Was, To be true in thought and dedes alle
Unto the Kyng of Love, the lord ryalle;
And to the Quene, as feithfull and as kynde,
As I coude thynke with harte, and wille, and mynde.

The secunde statute, Secretely to kepe
Councell of love, nat blowyng every where
All that I knowe, and let it synk and flete;
It may not sowne in every wightes ere:
Exilyng slaunder ay for dred and fere,
And to my lady, which I love and serve,
Be true and kynde, her grace for to deserve.

The thridde statute was clerely write also,
Withouten chaunge to lyve and dye *the* same,

None other love to take, for wele ne woo,
For blynde delite, for ernest nor for game:
Withoute repent for laughyng or for grame,
To biden still in full perseveraunce:
Al this was hole the kynges ordynaunce.

The fourth statute, To purchace ever to here,
And stiren folke to love, and beten fire
On Venus awter, here aboute and there,
And preche to *hem* of love and hote desire,
And telle howe love will quyten wel *here* hire:
This muste be kepte; and loth me to displease:
If love be wroth, passe; for *there*by is an ease.

The fifth statute, Not to be daungerous,
Yf that a thought wold reyve me of my slepe:
Nor of a sight be over squymouse;
And so veryeuly this statute was to kepe,
To turne and walowe in my bed and wepe,
When that my lady, of her crueltié,
Wold from her harte exilyn all pyté.

The sixte statute, it was for me to use,
Alone to wander, voyde of company,
And on my ladys bewtie for to muse,
And to thinke no force to lyve or dye;
And eft agayn to thynke the remedy,
Howe to her grace I myght anon attayne,
And telle my woo unto my souverayne.

The seventh statute was, To be pacient,
Whether my lady joyfull were or wroth;
For wordes glad or hevy, dilygent,

Wheder that she me helden lefe or loth:
And hereupon I put was to myn othe,
Hir for to serve, and lowly to obey,
And shewing my chere, ye, twenty sith aday.

The eighth statute to my remembraunce,
Was, To speke and praye my lady dere,
With hourely laboure and grete attendaunce,
Me for to love with all her harte entiere,
And me desire and make me joyfull chere,
R'ght as she is, surmountyng every faire,
Of bewtie well and gentill debonayre.

The ninth statute, with lettres writ of gold,
This was the sentence, How that I and alle
Shuld ever drede to be to overbolde
Her to displease; and truly so I shall;
But ben content for thyng that may befalle,
And mekely take her chastisement and yerde,
And to offende her ever ben aferd.

The tenth statute was Egally discerne
Bytwene thy lady and thyn abilitee,
And thynke thyself arte never like to yerne,
By right, her mercy nor of equité,
But of her grace and womanly pitee;
For though thy self be noble in thy strene,
A thowsand fold more nobill is thy quene.

Thy lives lady and thy souverayn,
That hath thyne harte all hole in governaunce,
Thow maist no wise hit taken to disdayne,
To put the humbly at her ordynaunce,

And yife her free the reyne of her plesaunce;
For libertie ys thing that women loke,
And truly ellis the mater is a croke.

The eleventh statute, Thy signes for to knowe
With ie and fynger, and with smyles softe,
And lowe to kowigh, and alway for to shoue,
For dred of spies, for to wynken ofte:
But secretly to bring up a sigh alofte,
And eke beware of overmoche resorte;
For that paraventure spilleth all thy sporte.

The twelfth statute remember to observe:
For all the payne thow haste for love and wo,
All is to lite her mercy to deserve,
Thow muste thynke, where ever thow ride or goo,
And mortall woundes suffer thow also,
All for her sake, and thynke it wel beset,
Upon thy love, for it may be no bette.

The thirteenth statute, Whilom is to thynke,
Whate thyng may best thy lady lyke and please,
And in thyne hartes botom let it synke:
Som thing devise, and take for thyne ease,
And send it her, that may her harte pease:
Some hert, or ryng, or letre, or devise,
Or precious stone; but spare not for no price.

The fourteenth statute eke thou shalte assaye
Firmely to kepe the moste parte of thy life:
Wisshe that thy lady in thyne armes laye,
And nyghtly dreme, thow hast thy nyghtes harte wife
Swetely in armes, straynyng her as blife:

And whanne thou seest it is but fantasye,
Se that thow syng not over merily.

For to moche joye hath oft a wofull end.
It longith eke this statute for to holde,
To deme thy lady evermore thy frende,
And thynke thyself in no wise a cocold.
In every thing she doth but as she shulde:
Construe the beste, beleve no tales newe,
For many a lie is told, that semyth full trewe.

But thinke that she, so bounteous and fayre,
Cowde not be fals: imagyne this algate;
And thinke that tonges wykked wold her appaiere,
Sklaunderyng her name and worshipfull estate,
And lovers true to setten at debate:
And though thow seest a fawte right at thyne ye,
Excuse it blive, and glose it pretily.

The fifteenth statute, Use to swere and stare,
And counterfete a lesyng hardely,
To save thy ladys honoure every whare,
And put thyself *for her* to fighte boldely:
Sey she is gode, vertuous, and gostely,
Clere of entent, and harte, and thought and wille;
And argue not for reson ne for skille

Agayne thy ladys plesire ne entent,
For love wille not be counterpleted indede:
Sey as she seith, than shalte thowe not be shent,
The crowe is white; ye truly, so I rede:
And ay whate thyng that she the wille forbidde,
Eschewe all that, and give her soverentie,
Hir appetite folowe in all degree.

The sixteenth statute, kepe it yf thow may:—
Seven sith at nyght thy lady for to please,
And seven at mydnyght, seven at morowe day,
And drynke a cawdell erly for thyne ease.
Do this and kepe thyne hede from all dyssease,
And wynne the garland here of lovers alle,
That ever come in courte, or ever shalle.

Full fewe, thynke I, this statute hold and kepe;
But truly this my reason giveth me fele,
That som lovers shulde rather fall aslepe,
Than take on hand to please so ofte and wele.
There lay none othe to this statute adele,
But kepe who myght as gave hym his corage:
Nowe get this garlant lusty folke of age.

Nowe wynne whoo may, ye lusty folke of youth,
This garland fressh, of floures rede and white,
Purpill and blewe, and colours ful uncowth,
And I shall crowne hym kyng of all delite!
In all the courte there was not, to my sight,
A lover trewe, that he ne was adrede,
When he expresse hath hard the statute redde.

The seventeenth statute, When age approchith on,
And lust is leide, and all the fire is queynt,
As fresshly than thowe shalte begynne to fonne,
And dote in love, and all her ymage paynte
In the remembraunce, till thow begyn*ne* to faynte,
As in the firste season thyne hart beganne:
And her desire, though thowe ne may ne can

Perfourm*e* thy lyvyng actuell, and lust;
Regester this in thy remembraunce;

Eke whan thow maist not kepe thy thing from rust,
Yet speke and talk of pleasaunt dalyaunce;
For that shall make thyne harte rejoyse and daunce,
And when thou maist no more the gam assaye,
The statute bidde the praye for hem that maye.

The eighteenth statute, holy to commende,
To please thy lady, is, That thow eschewe
With sluttisshnesse thyself for to offende;
Be jolif, fressh, and fete, with thinges newe,
Courtly with maner, this is all thy due,
Gentill of porte, and loving clenlynesse;
This is the thing that liketh thi maistresse.

And not to wander liche a dulled asse,
Ragged and torn, disguysed in array,
Rybaude in speche, or oute of mesure passe,
Thy bounde excedyng; thynk on this alway:
For women *been* of tender hartes aye,
And lightly sette *here* plesure in a place;
When they misthinke, they lightly let it passe.

The nineteenth statute, Mete and drynke forgete:
Eche other day, se that thow faste for love,
For in the courte thei live withouten mete,
Sauf suche as comyth from Venus all above;
Thei take none heed, in payne of grete reprove,
Of mete and drynke, for that is all in vayn,
Onely they live be sight of *here soverayne*.

The twentieth statute, last of everychone,
Enrolle it in thyn hartes privité;
To wring and waile, to turne, and sigh and grone,
When that thy lady absent is from the;

And eke revowe the wordes *alle* that she
Bitwene you twayn hath seid, and all the chere
That the hath made thy lives lady dere.

And se thyne harte in quiete ne in rest
Sojorne till tyme thowe sene thy lady eft;
But where she wonne be south, or est, or west,
With all thy force, nowe se it be not left:
Be diligent, till tyme thy life be reft,
In that thowe maist, thy lady for to see;
This statute was of old antiquité.

An officer of high auctorité,
Cleped Rigour, made us *to* swere anon:
He nas corrupt with parcialyté,
Favour, prayer, ne gold that *clierely* shone;
'Ye shalle,' quod he, 'nowe sweren here echone,
Yong and olde, to kepe, in that *ye* maye,
The statutes truly, all aftir this day.'

O God, thought I, hard is to make this oth!
But to my pouer shall I *hem* observe;
In all this world nas mater half so loth
To swere for all; for though my body sterve,
I have no myght *hem* hole for to reserve.
But herkyn nowe the cace how it befell:
After my othe was made, the trouth to telle,

I turned leves, lokyng on this boke,
Where other statutes were of women shene;
And right furthwith Rigour on me gan loke
Full angrily, and seid unto the quene
I traitour was, and charged me let bene:
'There may no man,' quod he, 'the statute knoue,
That long to women, hie degree ne lowe.

'In secrete wise thay kepten ben full close,
They sowne ecchone to libertie, my frend;
Pleasaunt thay be, and to *here* owen purpose;
There wote no wight of *hem*, but God and fend,
Ne naught shall witte, unto the worldes ende.
The quene hath yove me charge, in payne to dye,
Never to rede ne sen *hem* with myne ye.

'For men shall not so nere of councell ben
With womanhede, ne knowen of her guyse,
Ne whate they thinke, ne of *here* wit thengyne;
I me reporte to Salamon the wise,
And mighty Sampson, which begyled thries
With Dalida was; he wot that, in a throwe,
There may no man statute of women knowe.

'For it peraventure may right so befalle,
That they be bounde by nature to disceyve,
And spynne, and wepe, and sugre strewe on galle,
The hart of man to ravissh and to reyve,
And whet *here* tong as sharp as swerd or gleyve:
It may betide, this is *here* ordynaunce,
So muste thei lowly done the observaunce,

'And kepe the statute yoven *hem* of kynde,
Of suche as love have yove hem in *here* life.
Men may not wete why turneth every wynde,
Nor waxen wise, nor ben inquisytyf
To knowe secret of mayde, widue, or wife;
For thai *here* statutes have to *hem* reserved,
And never man to knowe *hem* hath deserved.

'Now dresse you furth, the God of Love you guyde!'
Quod Rigour than, 'and seke the temple brighte

Of Citherea goddesse, here beside;
Beseche her, by enfluence and myghte
Of all her vertue, you to teche aright*e*,
Howe for to serve youre ladis, and to please,
Ye that ben sped, and set your hart in ease.

'And ye that ben unpurveied, praye *her* eke
Comforte you sone with grace and destiné,
That ye may sette youre harte there ye maye like,
In suche a place, that it to love may be
Honoure and worship, and filicité
To you for ay. Now goth by one assente.
'Graunt mercy sir!' quod we, and furth we wente

Devoutly, soft and esy pace, to se
Venus, the goddesse, ymage all of golde:
And there we founde a thousand on *here* kne,
Som fressh and feire, som dedely to beholde,
In sondry mantils newe, and some were olde,
Som paynted were with flames rede as fire,
Outeward to shewe *here* inwarde hote desire:

With dolefull chere, ful feele in *here* complaynt,
Criede 'Lady Venus, rewe upon oure sore!
Receyve our billes, with teres al bedreynt;
We maye not wepe, there is no more in store;
But woo and payne us frettith more and more:
Thow blisseful planet, lovers sterre so shene,
Have rowth on us, that sighe and carefull bene;

'And ponysshe, Lady, grevously, we praye,
The false untrew, with counterfete plesaunce,
That made *here* othe, be trewe to live or dye,

With chere assured, and with countenaunce;
And falsly now thay foten loves daunce,
Baren of rewth, untrue of that they seid,
Now that *here* lust and plesire is alleide.'

Yit eft again, a thousand milion,
Rejoysing, love, ledyng *here* life in blis:
Thay seid:—'Venus, redresse of al divysion,
Goddesse eternel, thy name ihired is!
By loves bond is knyt all thing, iwis,
Best unto best, the erth to water wanne,
Birde unto bird, and woman unto *manne*;

'This is the life of joye that we ben in,
Resemblyng life of hevenly paradyse;
Love is exiler ay of vice and synne;
Love maketh hartes lusty to devise;
Honoure and grace, have thay in every wise,
That ben to loves lawe obedyent;
Love makith folke benigne and diligent,

'Ay steryng *hem* to drede vice and shame:
In *here* degree it maketh *hem* honorable;
And swete it is of love *to* beré the name,
So that his love be feithfull, true and stable:
Love prunyth hym, to semen amyable;
Love hath no faute, there it is excercised,
But sole with *hem* that have all love dispised.

'Honoure to the, celestiall and clere
Goddesse of love, and to thy celcitude,
That yevest us light so ferre downe from thi spere,
Persing our hartes with thi pulcritude!

Compersion none of similitude
May to thi grace be made in no degré,
That hast us set with love in unité.

'Grete cause have we to prayse thy name and the,
For through the we live in joye and blisse.
Blessed be thowe, most souverayn to se!
Thi holy courte of gladnesse may not mysse:
A thousand sith we may rejoise in this,
That we ben thyne with harte, and all ifere
Enflamed with thi grace, and hevynly fere.'

Musyng of tho that spakyn in this wise,
I me bethought in my remembraunce
Myne oryson right godely to devise,
And pleasauntly with hartes obeysaunce,
Beseche the goddesse voiden my grevaunce;
For I loved eke, sauf that I wist nat where;
Yet downe I set and seid as ye shall here.

'Feirest of alle that ever were or be!
Lucerne and light to pensif creature!
Myne hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
My goddesse brighte, my fortune and my ure,
I yeve and yeld my harte to the full sure,
Humbly beseching, lady, of thi grace
Me to bestowe into som blissed place.

'And here I vowe me feithfull, true, and kynde,
Withoute offence of mutabilité,
Humbly to serve, while I have witte and mynde,
Myne hole affiaunce, and my lady free!
In thilke place, there ye me signe to be:

And, sith this thing of newe is yove *me, aye*
To love and serve, and nedely most I obey.

'Be merciable with thi fire of grace,
And fix myne harte there bewtie is and routh,
For hote I love, determyne in no place,
Sauf only this, be God and by my trouth,
Trowbled I was with slomber, sleep, and slouth
This other night, and in a visioun
I se a woman romen up and downe,

'Of mene stature, and semly to beholde,
Lusty and fressh, demure of countynaunce,
Yong and wel shape, with here *that* shone as gold,
With eyen as cristall, farcid with plesaunce;
And she gan stirre myne harte a lite to daunce;
But sodenly she vanysshe gan right there:
Thus I may sey, I love and wot not where.

For whate she is, ne her dwellyng I note,
And yit I fele that love distreyneth me:
Might iche her knowe, her wold I fayn, God wot,
Serve and obeye with all benignité.
And if that other be my destiné,
So that no wise I shall hir never se,
Than graunte me her that best may liken me.

'With glad rejoyse to live in parfite hele,
Devoide of wrath, repent, or variaunce;
And able me to do that may be wele
Unto my lady, with hartes hie plesaunce:
And, myghty Goddesse, through thy purviaunce
My witte, my thought, my lust and love so guyde,
That to thyne honure I may me provyde

'To set myne harte in place there I may like,
And gladly serve with all affeccioun.
Grete is the payn which at myne hart doth styke,
Till I be sped by thyne eleccion:
Helpe, lady Goddesse! that possession
I myght of her have, that in all my life
I clepen shal my quene and hartes wife.

'And in the Courte of Love to dwelle for aye
My wille it is, and done the sacryfice:
Dayly with Diane eke for to fight and fraye,
And holden werre, as myght well me suffice:
That goddesse chaste I kepen in no wise
To serve; a figge for all her chastité!
Hir lawe is for religiosité.'

And thus gan fynysshe preyer, lawde, and preice,
Which that I yove to Venus on my kne,
And in myne harte to ponder and to peice;
I gave anon hir ymage fressh bewtie:
Heile to that figure swete! and heile to the,
Cupide,' quod I, and rose and yede my way,
And in the temple as I yede, I sey

A shryne sormownting all in stones riche,
Of which the force was plesaunce to myne ye,
With diamant or saphire, never liche
I have none seyen, ywrought so wounderly.
So when I met with Philobone in hie,
I gan demaunde, 'Who is this sepulture?'
'Forsoth,' quod she, 'a tender creature

'Ys shryned there, and Pité is her name.
She saw an egle wreke hym on a flye,

And pluk his wynge, and ete hym, in his game,
And tender harte of that hath made her dye:
Eke she wold wepe, and morne right piteously
To sene a lover suffre grete destresse.
In alle the courte nas none, that as I gesse,

'That coude a lover half*e* so well availe,
Ne of his woo the torment or the rage
Asslaken, for he was sure, withouten faile,
That of his gryefe she coude the hete asuage.
In stede of Pité, spedeth hote corage
The maters alle of courte, now she is dede;
I me report in this to womanhede.

'For weile and wepe, and crye, and speke, and praye,—
Women wolde not have pité on thi playnt;
Ne by that meane to ease thyne hart conveye,
But the receyven for *here* owen talent:
And sey that Pité causith the, in consent
Of rewth, to take thy service and thy payne
In that thow maist, to please thy soverayne.

'But this is councell, kepe it secretly,'
Quod she 'I nolde for all the world abowte,
The Quene of Love it wist; and witte ye why?
For yf by me this mater spryngen oute,
In courte no lenger shuld I, owte of dowte,
Dwellen, but shame in all my life endry:
Nowe kepe it close,' quod she, 'this hardely.

'Well, all is well! Nowe shall ye sene,' she seide,
'The feirest lady under sonne that is:
Come on with me, demeane you liche a mayde,
With shamefast drede, for ye shall speke, iwis,

With her that is the mir*our* joye and blisse;
But somwhate straunge and sad of her demeane
She is, beware youre countenaunce be sene,

'Nor over light, ne rechelesse, ne to bolde,
Ne malapert, ne rynnyng with your tong*e*;
For she will you abeisen and behold*e*,
And you demand*e* why ye were hens so long*e*
Oute of this courte, withouten resorte among*e*.
And Rosiall her name is hote aright,
Whose harte as yet is yoven to no wight.

'And ye also ben, as I understond,
With love but light avaunced, by your worde;
Might ye be happe youre fredome maken bond,
And fall in grace with her, and wel accorde,
Well myght ye th*a*nk the God of Love and Lord;
For she that ye sawe in youre dreme appere,
To love suche one, whate ar *ye* then the nere?

'Yit wote ye whate? as my remembraunce
Me yevith nowe, ye fayne where that ye seye,
That ye with love hadde never acqueyntaunce,
Sauf in your dreme right late this other daye:
Why, yis, pardé! my life, that durst I laye,
That ye were caught opon an heth, when I
Saw you complayn, and sighe full piteously.

'Withynne an erber, and a garden faier
With floures growe, and herbes vert*u*ouse,
Of which the savour swete was and the *aire*,
There were youre self full *h*ote and amerouse:
Iwis ye ben to nyse and daungerouce;

A! wolde ye nowe repent, and love some newe?'
'Nay by my trouth,' I seid, 'I never knewe

'The godely wight, whoes I shall be for aye:
Guyde me the Lord that love hath made and me.'
But furth we went into a chambre gay,
There was Rosiall, womanly to se,
Whose stremes, sotell-percyng of her ye,
Myne harte ganne thrille for bewtie in the stounde:
'Alas,' quod I, 'whoo hath me yove this wounde?'

And than I dredde to speke till at the laste
I grete the lady reverently and wele;
Whan that my sigh was gon and overpast,
Than downe on knees ful humbly gan I knele,
Beseching her my fervent woo to kele,
For there I toke full purpose in my mynde,
Unto her grace my paynfull harte to bynde.

For yf I shall all fully her discryve,
Her hede was rounde, by compace of nature,
Her here as gold,—she passed all on live,—
And lylly forehede hade this creature,
With lovelyche browes, flawe, of coloure pure,
Bytwene the whiche was mene disseveraunce
From every browe, to shewe a *due* distaunce.

Her nose directed streight, and even as lyne,
With fourme and shap therto convenient,
In which the goddes mylke white path doth shyne;
And eke her yen ben bright and orient
As is the smaragde, unto my juggement,
Or yet thise sterres hevenly, smale and brighte;
Hir visage is of lovely rede and white.

Her mouth is shorte, and shitte in litell space,
Flamyng somdele, not over rede, I mene,
With prengnante lippes, and thike to kisse,
percas;
(For lyppes thynne, not fatte, but ever lene,
They serve of naught, thay be not worth a bene;
For if the basse ben full, there is delite,
Maximyan truly thus doth he write.)

But to my purpose:—I sey, white as snowe
Ben all her teth, and in order thay stande
Of one stature; and eke her breth, I trowe,
Surmounteth all oders that ever I found
In swetnesse; and her body, face, and honde
Ben sharply slender, so that from the hede
Unto the fote, all is but womanhede.

I hold my pease of other thinges hidde:—
Here shal my soule, and not my tong, bewraye:—
But how she was arrayed, yf ye me bidde,
That shall I well discovere you and saye:
A bend of gold and silke, ful fressh and gay,
With her in tresse, ibrowdered full welle,
Right smothly kempte, and shynyng every dele.

Aboute her nec a floure of fressh devise
With rubies set, that lusty were to sene;
And she in gowne was, light and sommer-wise,
Shapen full wele, the coloure was of grene,
With awreat seint aboute her sides clene,
With dyvers stones, precious and riche:—
Thus was she raied, yit saugh I never her liche.

For yf that Jove hadde but this lady seyn,
Tho Calixto ne *yet* Alcmenia,
Thay never hadden in his armes leyne;
Ne he hadde loved the faire Europa;
Ye, ne yit Dané ne Antiopa!
For all *here* bewtie stode in Rosiall,
She semed lich a thyng celestiall.

In bowntė, favor, porte, and semlynesse
Plesaunt of figure, myrroure of delite,
Gracious to sene, and rote of gentilnesse,
With angell visage, lusty rede and white:
There was not lak, sauf daunger had a lite
This godely fressh in rule and governaunce;
And somdele straunge she was for her plesaunce.

And truly sone I toke my leve and wente,
Whanne she hadde me enquired whate I was;
For more and more impressen gan the dente
Of Loves darte, while I beheld her face;
And efte agayn I com to seken grace,
And up I put my bille, with sentence clere
That folowith aftir; rede and ye shall here.

'O ye fressh, of bewtie the rote,
That nature hath fourmed so wele and made
Pryncesse and Quene! and ye that may do bote
Of all my langoure with youre wordes glade!
Ye woundede me, ye made me wo bestad;
Of grace redresse my mortall griefe, as ye
Of al myne harme the verrey causer be.

'Now am I caught, and unware sodenly,
With persant stremes of your yen *so* clere,

Subjecte to ben, and serven you mekely,
And all youre man, iwis, my lady dere,
Abidyng grace, of which I you require,
That merciles ye cause me not to sterve;
But guerdon me, liche as I may deserve.

'For, by my trouth, the dayes of my breth
I am and wille be youre in wille and harte,
Pacient and meke, for you to suffre dethe
If it require; nowe rewe upon my smerte;
And this I swere, I never shall oute sterte
From Loves Courte, for none adversité,
So ye wold rewe on my distresse and me.

'My destiné, my fate, and ure, I blisse,
That have me set to ben obedient
Only to you, the floure of all iwis:
I truste to Venus never to repente;
For ever redy, glad and dyligent,
Ye shalle me fynde in service to your grace,
Tyll deth my life oute of my body rase.

'Humble unto your excellence so digne,
Enforcyng ay my wittes and delite
To serve and please with glad harte and benigne,
And ben as Troylus, Troyes knyghte,
Or Antony for Cleopatre bright,
And never you me thynkes to reneye:
This shall I kepe unto myne endyng daye.

'Enprint my speche in youre memoriall
Sadly, my princesse, salve of all my sore!
And think that, for I wolde becommen thrall,

And ben youre owyn, as I have seid before,
Ye most of pité cherisshe more and more
Youre man, and tender aftir his deserte,
And yif him corage for to ben expert.

'For where that one hath sette his harte on fire,
And fyndeth nether refute ne plesaunce,
Ne worde of comforte, deth will quite his hire.
Allas! that there is none allegeaunce
Of all *here* woo! allas, the grete grevaunce
To love unloved! But ye, my Lady dere,
In other wise may governe this matere.'

'Truly gramercy, frende; of your gode wille,
And of youre profer in youre humble wise!
But for youre service, take and kepe it stille.
And where ye say, I ought you well cheryse,
And of youre grefe the remedy devise,
I knowe not why: I nam acqueynted welle
With you, ne wote not soothly where ye dwelle.'

'In arte of love I write, and songes make,
That may be song in honour of the Kyng
And Quene of Love; and than I undertake,
He that is sadde shall than full mery synge.
And daungerus not ben in every thing
Beseche I you, but sene my wille and rede,
And let your answere put me oute of drede.'

'Whate is your name? reherse it here I pray,
Of whens and where, of whate condicion
That ye ben of? Let se, com of and say!
Fayne wold I knowe your disposicion:
Ye have putte uppon your olde entencion;

But whate ye meane to serve me I note,
Sauf that ye saye ye love me wounder hote.'

'My name? allas, my hart, *why makest thow straunge?*
Philogenet I cald am fer and nere,
Of Cambrige clerke, that never think to chaunge
Fro you that with youre hevenly stremes clere
Ravissh myne harte and goste and al in fere:
This is the firste, I write my bille for grace,
Me thynke I se som mercy in youre face.

'And whate I mene, by goddes that all hath wrought,
My bille now maketh fynall mencion,
That ye bene lady in myne inward thought
Of all myne harte withouten offencion,
That I beste love, and have sith I beganne
To drawe to courte. Lo thanne! whate myght I saye?
I yeld me here unto youre nobleye.

'And if that I offend, or wilfully
Be pompe of harte your precepte disobeye,
Or done agayn youre wille unskyllfully,
Or greven you for ernest or for playe,
Correcte ye me right sharply than I praye,
As it is sene unto youre womanhede,
And rewe on me, or ellis I nam but dede.'

'Nay, God forbede to feffe you so with grace,
And for a worde of sugred eloquence,
To have compassion in so litell space!
Than were it tyme that som of us were hens!

Ye shall not fynde in me suche insolence.
Ay! whate is this? may we not suffer sight?
How may ye loke upon the candill-light,

'That clerer is and hotter than myn ye?
And yet ye seid the bemes perse and frete:—
Howe shall ye thanne the candel-light endrye?
For well wotte ye, that hath the sharper hete.
And there ye bidde me you correcte and bete,
Yf ye offende,—nay, that may not be done:
There come but fewe that speden here so soon.

'Withdrawe your ye, withdrawe from presens eke:
Hurte not youreself, thrugh folly, with a loke;
I wolde be sory so to make you syke!
A woman shulde be ware eke whom she toke:
Ye beth a clarke;—go serchynne *well* my boke,
Yf any women ben so light to wynne:
Nay, abide a while, thogh ye were alle my kynne.

'So sone ye may not wynne myne harte, in trouth
The guyse of courte wille sene youre stedfastnesse,
And as ye done, to have upon you routh.
Youre owen deserte, and lowly gentilnesse,
That wille rewarde you joy for hevynesse;
And thogh ye waxen pale, and grene and dede
Ye most it use a while, withouten drede,

'And it accept and grucchen in no wise;
But where as ye me hastily desire
To bene to love, me thynke ye be not wise.
Cease of your language! cease I you require!
For he that hath this twenty yere bene here

May not obtayne; than marveile I that ye
Be nowe so bold, of love to trete with me.'

'A! mercy, hart, my lady and my love,
My rightwise princesse and my lives guyde!
Nowe may I playne to Venus all above,
That rewthles ye *me* gife this wounde wide!
Whate have I done? why may it not betide,
That for my trouth I may receyved be?
Allas! thanne youre daunger and your crueltie!

'In wofull howre I gote was, welawey!
In wofull oure fostered and ifedde,
In wofull oure iborne, that I ne may
My supplicacion swetely have ispedde!
The frosty grave and cold must be my bedde,
Withoute ye list youre grace and mercy shewe,
Deth with his axe so faste on me doth hewe.

'So grete disease and in so litell while,
So littel joy that felte I never yet;
And at my wo Fortune gynnyth to smyle,
That never arst I felte so harde a fitte:
Confounded ben my spritis and my witte,
Tylle that my lady take me to her cure,
Which I love best of erthely creature.

'But that I like, that may I not come by;
Of that I playn, that have I habondaunce;
Sorowe and thought, thay sitte me wounder nye;
Me is withholde that myght be my plesaunce:
Yet turne agayn, my worldly suffisaunce!
O lady bright! and sauf your feithfull true,
And ar I dye yit ones upon me rewe.'

With that I fell in *swounde* and dede as stone,
With coloure slayn and wanne as asshe*n* pale;
And by the hande she caught me up anon,
'Aryse anon,' quod she, 'whate? have ye dronken dwale?
Why slepen ye? it is no ny*ght*irtale.
'Now mercy swete,' quod I, iwis affraied:
'Whate thyng,' quod she, 'hath made you so dysmayed?

'Now wote I well that ye a lover be,
Youre hewe is witnesse in this thyng,' she seide:
'If ye were secrete, *ye* mighte knowe,' quod she,
'Curteise and kynde, al this shulde be aleyde:
And now, myne harte! all that I have missaid,
I shall amend and set*te* youre harte in ease.'
'That worde it is,' quod I, 'that doth me please.

'But this I charge, that ye the st*atut*es kepe,
And breke *hem* not for slouth nor ignoraunce.'
With that she gan to smyle and laughen depe,
'Iwis,' quod I, 'I wille do youre plesaunce,
The sixteenth statute doth me grete grevaunce.
But ye most that relesse or modifie.'
'I graunte,' quod she, 'and so I wille truly.'

And softly thanne her coloure gan appeire,
As rose so rede, throughoute her visage alle,
Wherefore me thynke it is accordyng here,
That she of right be cleped Rosyall.
Thus have I wonne, with wordes grete and smalle,
Some godely worde of hir that I love beste,
And trust she shall yit sette myne harte in rest.

'Goth on,' she seid to Philobone, 'and take
This man with you, and lede hym all abowte
Withynne the courte, and shewe hym, for my sake,
Whate lovers dwelle withynne, and alle the rowte
Of officers him shewe, for he is, oute of dowte,
A straunger yit:'—'Come on,' quod Philobone,
'Philogenet, with me now must ye gon.'

And stalkyng softe with easy pase, I sawe,
Aboute the kyng stonden enviroun,
Attendaunce, Diligence, and their felawe
Fortherer, *Esperaunce*, and many one;
Dred-to-offende there stode, and not alone;
For there was eek the cruel adversaire,
The lovers foe, that cleped is Dispaire;

Which unto me spak angrely and felle,
And seid, my lady me dysseyve ne shalle:
'Trowest thowe,' quod she, 'that all that she did telle,
Ys true? Nay, nay, but under hony galle.
Thy birth and hirs they be nothing egalle:
Caste of thyne harte, for alle her wordes white,
For in gode faith she lovith the but a lite.

'And eke remember thyne habilité
May not compare with hir, this well thowe wote.'
Ye, than came Hope and seid, 'My frende let be!
Beleve hym not: Despaire he gynneth dote.'
'Alas!' quod I, 'here is both cold and hote:
The tone me biddeth love, the toder naye,
Thus wote I not whate me is best to saye.

'But well wote I, my lady grauntede me,
Truly to be my woundes remedye;

Her gentilnesse may not infected be
With doblenes, thus trust I till I dye.'
So cast I voide Despaires companye,
And taken Hope to councel and to frende.
'Ye, kepe that wele,' quod Philobone, 'in mynde.'

And there beside, withyn a bay wyndowe,
Stode one in grene, ful large of brede and length,
His berd as blak as fethers of the crowe;
His name was Lust, of wounder might and strength;
And with Delite to argue there he thynketh,
For this was alle his opynyon,
That love was synne: and so he hath begonne

To reasone faste, and legge auctorité:
'Nay,' quod Delite, 'love is a vertue clere,
And from the soule his progresse holdeth he:
Blynd appityte of lust doth often stirre,
And that is synne: for reason lakketh there,
For thowe dost thinke thi neighbours wife *to* wynne:
Yit thynk it well that love may not be synne;

'For God, and saint, thay love right verely,
Voide of al synne and vise: this knowe I wele,
Affecion of flessh is synne truly;
But verray love is vertue, as I fele,
For verray love may thy freyle desire akkele:
For *verray* love is love withouten synne.'
'Nowe stynte,' quod Lust, 'thow spekest not worth a pynne.'

And there I left *hem* in *here* arguyng,
Romyng ferther in the castell wide,

And in a corner Lier stode talkyng
Of lesinges faste, with Flatery there beside;
He seid that women were attire of pride,
And men were founde of nature variaunte,
And coude be false and shewen beawe semblaunt.

Then Flatery bespake and seid, iwis:
'Se, so she goth on patens faire and fete,
Hit doth right wele: whate prety man is this
That rometh her? nowe truly drynke ne mete
Nede I not have, mine herte for joye doth bete
Hym to beholde, so is he godely fressh:
It semeth for love his harte is tender nessh.'

This is the courte of lusty folke and gladde,
And wel becometh *here* abite and arraye:
O why be som so sory and so sadde,
Complaynyng thus in blak and white and graye?
Freres thay ben, and monkes, in gode faye:
Alas, for rewth! grete dole it is to sene,
To se *hem* thus bewaile and sory bene.

Se howe thei crye and wryng *here* handes white,
For thei so sone wente to religion!
And eke the nonnes with vaile and wymple plight,
Here thought is, thei ben in confusion:
'Alas,' thay sayn, 'we fayne perfeccion,
In clothes wide, and lake oure libertie;
But all the synne mote on oure frendes be.

'For, Venus wote, we wold as fayne as ye,
That ben attired here and wel besene,
Desiren man and love in oure degree,
Ferme and feithfull right as wolde the quene:

Oure frendes wikke, in tender youth and grene,
Ayenst oure wille made *us* religious;
That is the cause we morne and waylen thus.'

Than seide the monkes and freres in the tide,
'Well may we course oure abbeyes and our place,
Our statutes sharpe to syng in copes wide,
Chastly to kepe us oute of loves grace,
And nevere to fele comforte ne solace;
Yet suffere we the hete of loves fire,
And aftir that *som* other happly we desire.

'O Fortune cursed, why nowe and wherefore
Hast thowe,' thay seide, 'bereft us libartie,
Sith nature yave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovers be?
Why mote we suffere suche adversité,
Dyane to serve, and Venus to refuse?
Full often sithe thise matiers doth us muse.

'We serve and honoure, sore ayenst oure wille,
Of chastité the goddes and the quene;
Us lefer were with Venus biden stille,
And have reward for love, and soget bene
Unto thise women courtely, fressh, and shene.
Fortune, we curse thi whele of variaunce!
There we were wele thou revist our plesaunce.'

Thus leve I *hem*, with voice of pleint and care,
In ragyng woo crying full petiously;
And as I yede, full naked and full bare
Some I beholde, lokyng dispiteously
On poverté, that dedely caste *here* ye;

And 'Welaway!' thei cried, and were not fayne,
For they ne myght *here* glad desire attayne.

For lak of richesse worldely and of goode,
Thay banne and curse, and wepe, and seyn, 'Allas,
That poverté hath us hent that whilom stode
At hartis eas, and fre and in gode case!
But now we dare not shew our-self in place,
Ne us embolde to dwelle in company,
There as oure harte wolde love right faithfully.'

And yet agaynewarde shryked every nonne,
The *pange* of love so strayneth *hem* to crye:
'Nowe woo the tyme,' quod thay, 'that we be boune!
This hatefull ordre nyse will done us dye!
We sigh and sobbe, and bleden inwardly,
Fretyng oure self with thought and hard complaynt,
Than ney for love we waxen wode and faynt.'

And as I stode beholdyng here and there,
I was ware of a sorte full languysshyng,
Savage and wilde of lokyng and of chere,
Here mantaylles and *here* clothes aye teryng;
And ofte thay were of nature complaynyng,
For they *here* membres lakked, fote and hande,
With visage wry, and blynde, I understande.

Thay lakkede shap, and beautie to preferre
Hem self in love: and seid that God and Kynde
Hath forged *hem* to worshippen the sterre,
Venus the bright, and leften all behynde
His other werkes clene and oute of mynde:

'For other have *here* full shape and bewtie,
And we,' quod thay, 'ben in deformyté.'

And nye to *hem* there was a companye,
That have the susters waried and mysseid,
I mene the thre of fatall destyne,
That be our wordes: and sone in a brayde,
Oute gan thay crye as thay had*de* been afrayed,
'We curse,' quod thay, 'that ever hath nature,
Iformed us this wofull life to endure.'

And there was Contrite, and gan him repent*e*,
Confessyng hole the wounde that Citheré
Hath with the darte of hote desire hym sent,
And howe that he to love muste subjet be:
Thanne held he all his skornes vanyté,
And seid*e* that lovers lede a blisfull life,
Yong*e* men and old, and widue, maide and wife.

'Bereve me, Goddesse,' quod he, '*of* thy myght,
My skornes all and skoffes, that I have
No power for to mokken any wight,
That in thy service dwelle: for I d*ide* rave:
This knowe I welle right nowe, so God me save,
And I shal be the chefe post of thy feith,
And love uphold*e*, the rovers who-so seith.'

Dissemble stode not ferre from hym in trouth,
With party mantill, party hode and hose;
And seid he had upon his lady rowth,
And thus he wounde hym in, and gan to glose
Of his entent ful doble, I suppose:
In all the world he seid he lovid *her* wele;
But ay me thoughte he loved hir nere a dele.

Eke Shamefastnesse was there, as I toke hede,
That blusshed rede, and darst nat ben aknowe
She lover was, for thereof hadde she drede;
She stode and hyng her visage downe alowe;
But suche a sight it was to sene, I trowe,
As for thise roses rody on *here* stalke:
There cowde no wight her spy to speke or talke

In loves arte, so gan she to abasshe,
Ne durste not utter al her privité:
Many a stripe and many a grievouse lasshe
She gaven to *hem* that wolden lovers be,
And hindered sore the sympill comonaltie,
That in no wise durste grace and mercy crave,
For were not she, thei nede but aske and have;

Where yf thay nowe approchyn for to speke,
Thanne Shamefastnesse returnyth *hem* agayn:
Thay thynke, if *we* oure secrete councell breke,
Our ladys wille have scorne on us certen,
And *par*aventure thynken grete disdayne:
Thus Shamefastnesse may bryngyn in dispeire,
When she is dede the toder will be heire.

Come forth Avaunter! nowe I rynge thy belle!
I spied hym sone; to God I make avowe,
He lokede blak as fendes doth in Helle:—
'The first,' quod he, 'that ever *I* dide *wowe*,
Withynne a worde she com, I wotte not howe.
So that in armes was my lady fre,
And so hath ben a thousand mo than she.

'In Englond, Bretayn, Spain, and Pycardie,
Artoys, and Fraunce, and up in hie Holande,

In Burgoyne, Naples, and Italy,
Naverne, and Grece, and up in hethen londe,
Was never woman yit that wolde withstonde,
To ben at myne commaundement whan I wolde:
I lakkede neither silver coyne ne golde.

'And there I met with this estate and that;
And here I broched, her, and here, I trowe:
Lo! there goith one of myne; and wotte ye whate?
Yonne fressh attired have I leyde ful lowe;
And suche one yonder eke right well I knowe:
I kepte the statute whan we lay ifere;
And yet yon same hath made me right goode chere.'

Thus hath Avaunter blowen every where
Al that he knowith, and more a thousand folde;
His ancestrye of kynne was to Liere,
For firste he makith promyse for to holde
His ladys councell, and it not unfolde;
Wherefore, the secrete when he doth unshitte,
That lieth he, that all the world may witte.

For falsing so his promyse and beheste,
I wounder sore he hath suche fantasie;
He lakketh witte, I trowe, or is a beste,
That canne no bette hymself with reason guye.
Be myne advice, Love shall be contrarie
To his avayle, and hym eke dishonoure,
So that in courte he shall no more sojoure.

'Tak hede,' quod she, this litell Philobone,
'Where Envye rokketh in the corner yonde,
And sitteth dirke; and ye shalle see anon
His lene bodie, fading face and honde,

Hymself he fretteth, as I understonde,
Witnes of Ovide methamorphososee,
The lovers foo he is, I will not gloose.

'For where a lover thinketh him promote,
Envye will grucche, repynyng at his wele;
It swelleth sore aboute his hartes rote,
That in no wise he canne-not live in hele;
And yf the feithfull to his lady stele,
Envye will noise and ryng it rounde aboute,
And seye much worse than done is, oute of dowte.'

And Prevye Thought, rejoycing of hym-self,
Stode not ferre thens in abite mervelous;
'Yonne is,' thought *I*, 'som sprite or som elf,
His sotill image is so curious:
Howe is,' quod I, 'that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I note of whate coloure?'
And nere I went and gan to lere and pore,

And frayned him a question full harde.
'What is,' quod I, 'the thyng thou lovest beste?
Or whate is bote unto thy paynes harde?
Me think thou liveste here in grete unreste,
Thowe wandrest ay from south to est and weste,
And est to north; as ferre as I canne see,
There is no place in courte may holden the.

'Whom folowest thowe? where is thy harte iset?
But my demaunde asoile I thee require.'
'Me thoughte,' quod he, 'no creature may lette
Me to ben here, and where as I desire:
For where as absence hath done oute the fire,

My mery thought it kyndelith yet agayn,
That bodely me thinke with my souverayne

'I stand and speke, and laugh, and kisse, and halse,
So that my thought comforteth me ful ofte:
I think, God wot, though all the world be false,
I wille be trewe; I think also howe softe
My lady is in speche, and this on lofte
Bryngeth myne harte *in* joye and *grete* gladnesse;
This prevey thought alayeth myne hevynesse.

'And whate I thinke or where to be, no man
In all this erth can tell, iwis, but I:
And eke there nys no swalowe swifte, ne swan
So wight of wyng, ne half *so* yerne can flye;
For I canne ben, and that right sodenly,
In Heven, in Helle, in Paradise, and here,
And with my laday, whan I wylle desire.

'I am of councell ferre and wide, I wote,
With lord and lady, and *here* privité
I wotte it all; and be it cold or hoote,
Thay shall*e* not speke withouten licence of me.
I mene, in suche as sesonable bee,
For first the thing is thought withynne the harte.
Er any worde oute from the mouth astarte.'

And with that worde Thought bad farewell and yeede:
Eke furth went I to sene the cortis guyse,
And at the dore came in, so God me spede,
Twenty courteours of age and of assise
Liche high, and broad, and, as I me advise,

The Golden Love, and Leden Love thay hight:
The tone was sad, the toder glad and light.

Yis! drawe youre harte, with all your force and myght,
To lustynesse and bene as ye have seid;
And thinke that I no drope of favour hight,
Ne never hade unto youre desire obeide,
Tille sodenly me thought*e* me was affrayed,
To sene you wax*e* so dede of countenaunce,
And Pité bade me done you som pleasaunce.

'Oute of her shryne she rose from dethe to live,
And in myne *ere* full prively she spake,
'Doth not youre servaunte hens away to drive,
Rosiall,' quod she; 'and than myn harte brak,
For tenderreiche: and where I founde moche lake
In youre persoune, *than* I me *self* bethought*e*,
And seid*e*, this is the man myne harte hath sought.'

'Gramercy, Pité! might I *but* suffice
To yeve *due* lawde unto thy shryne of gold,
God wotte I wold*e*: for sith that thou dide rise
From deth to live for me, I am behold*e*
To *thanken* you a thousand tymes told,
And eke my lady Rosyall the shene,
Which hath in comforte set myne harte, I wene.

'And here I make myne protestacion,
And depely swere, as myne power, to bene
Feithful, devoide of variacion,
And here forbere in anger or in tene,
And serviceable to my worldes quene,

With all my reason and intelligence,
To done her honoure high and reverence.'

I hadde not spoke so sone the word, but she,
My souverayne, dyde thanke me hartily,
And seid, 'Abide, ye shal dwelle stille with me
Tylle season come of May, for than truly,
The Kyng of Love and all his company
Shalle hold his feste full ryally and welle;'
And there I bode till that the sesone felle.

On May day, when the larke began to ryse,
To matens wente the lusty nightingale
Withyn a temple shapen hawthorne-wise;
He myghte not slepe in al the nyghtertale,
But '*Domine labia*,' gan he crye and gale,
'My lippes open, Lord of Love, I crye,
And let my mouth thi preysing now bewrye.'

The egle sang '*Venite* bodies alle,
And let us joye to love that is oure helth.'
And to the deske anon thay gan to falle,
And who came late he preced in by stelth:
Than seide the fawcon, oure owen hartis welth,
'*Domine Dominus noster* I wot,
Ye be the God that done us brenne thus hote.'

'*Cœli enarant*,' seide the popyngay,
'Youre myght is told in Heaven and firmament.'
And than came inne the goldfynch fresh and gay,
And seid this psalm with hartily glad intent,
'*Domini est terra*;' this laten intent,

The God of Love hath erth in governaunce:
And then the wren gan skippen and to daunce.

'*Jube Domne* O Lorde of Love, I praye
Commande me wel this lesson for to rede;
This legend is alle that wolden deye
Marters for love; God yif *here* sowles spede!
And to the Venus *singe* we, oute of drede,
By influence of all thy vertue greate,
Besechyng the to kepe us in oure hete.'

The seconde lesson robyn redebreste sang, 1380
'Hayle to the God and Goddesse of oure lay!'
And to the lectorn amorysly he sprong:—
'Haile eke,' quod *he*, 'O fresshe season of May,
Oure moneth glad that syngen on the spray!
Haile to the floures, red, and white, and blewe,
Which by *here* vertue maketh oure lustes newe!'

The thridde lesson the turtill-dove toke up,
And therat lough the mavis in *a* scorn:
He seid, 'O God, as mut I dyene or suppe,
This folissh dove wille gife us al an horne! 1390
There ben right here a thousand better borne,
To rede this lesson, which as welle as he,
And eke as hote, can love in all degree.

The turtylle dove seide, 'Welcom, welcom May,
Gladsom and light to lovers that ben trewe!
I thanke the Lord of Love that doth purveye
For me to rede this lesson al of dewe;
For in gode south of corage I pursue

To serve my make till deth us moste departe:'
And than '*Tu autem*' sang he all aparte.

'*Te deum amoris*' sang the thrustell-cok
Tuball hymself, the firste musician,
With key of armony coude not unloke
So swete tewne as that the thrustill can:
'The Lord of Love we praysen,' quod he than,
And so done alle the foules grete and lite,
'Honoure we May, in false lovers dispite.'

'*Dominus regnavit*,' seide the pecok there,
'The Lord of Love that myghty prynce, iwis,
He hath receyved here and every where:
Nowe *Jubilate* syng:'—'Whate meneth this?'
Seid than the lynnette, 'welcom, Lord of blisse!'
Oute sterte the owl with '*Benedicite*,'
'Whate meneth all this mery fare?' quod he.

'*Laudate*,' sang the larke with voice ful shrille;
And eke the kite '*O admirabile*;
This quere wil throwe myne eris pers and thrille;
But whate? welcom this May season,' quod he;
'And honoure to the Lord of Love mot be,
That hath this feeste so solempne and so high:'
'*Amen*,' seid alle, and so seid eke the pye.

And furth the cokkowe gan procede anon,
With '*Benedictus*' thankyng God in hast,
That in this May wold visite *hem* echon,
And gladden *hem* all while the feste shall leste:
And therewithal a loughter oute he braste,
'I thanke it God that I shuld ende the song,
And all the service which hath ben so long.'

Thus sange thay all the service of the feste,
And that was done right erly, to my dome;
And furth goith all the courte bothe moste and leste,
To feche the floures fressh, and braunche and blome;
And namly hawthorn brought both page and grome,
With fresshe garlantis partie blewe and white,
And *hem* rejoysen in *here* grete delite.

Eke eche at other threwe the floures brighte,
The prymerose, the violet, and the golde;
So than, as I beheld the riall sighte,
My lady gan me sodenly beholde,
And with a trewe love, plited many-folde,
She smote me thrugh the *very* harte as blive,
And Venus yet I thanke I am alive.

EXPLICIT.

THE PARLEMENT OF BRIDDES, OR THE ASSEMBLY OF FOULES.

THE lyf so short, the crafte so longe to lerne,
Thassay so harde, so sharpe the conquerynge,
The slyder joy, that alwey slyd so yerne;
Al this meene I be love, that my felynge
Astonyeth soo with a dredeful worchyng
So soore ywys, that whan I on hym thynke,
Nat wote I wel wher that I wake or wynke.

For al be that I knowe not Love in dede,
Ne wote how *that* he quyteth folke her hire,
Yet hapeth me in bookes ofte to rede
Of hys miracles, and of hys cruelle yre;
There rede I wel, he wol be lorde and sire:
Dar I not seyn hys strokes ben so sore;
But God save suche a lorde! I kan no more.

Of usage *olde*, what for luste, what for lore,
On bookes rede I ofte, as I yow tolde.
But why that I speke al this? Not yore
Agon, hit happed me for to beholde
Upon a booke was write wyth lettres olde;

And therupon, a certeyne thing to lerne,
The longe day ful fast I rad and yerne.

For out of olde feldys, as men seyth,
Cometh al this newe corne fro yere to yere;
And oute of olde bokes, in good feythe,
Cometh al thys newe science that men lere.
But now to purpose, of my firste matere:—
To rede forth hit gan me so delyte,
That al the day me thought *hit* but a lyte.

This booke, of which I *now* make mension,
Entitled was al there, I shal yow telle:—
'Tullius, of the dreme of the Scipion:'
Chapitres hyt had seven, of Hevene and Helle,
And erthe, and of soules that therynne duelle,
Of which, as shortly, as I kan *it* trete
Of his sentence I wol yow telle the grete.

First telleth hyt, whan Scipion was come
Into Aufryke, how he mette Massynysse,
That hym for joy in armes hath ynome.
Than telleth he hir speche and al the blysse,
That was betwixt hem til the day gan mysse;
And how his auncestre, Aufrikan so dere,
Gan on his slepe that nyght to hym appere.

Than tolde he hym, that, fro a sterry place,
How Aufrikan hath hym Cartage yshewed,
And warned hym before of al hys grace,
And seyde hym, what man, lered or lewede,
That loveth comune profyt, wel ythewede,
He shal unto a blysful place wende,
There the joy is that lasteth without ende.

Than asked he, yf the folke that here be dede
Have lyfe, and dwellynge in another place?
And Aufrikan seyde, Ye, withoute drede:
And *that* oure present worldes lyves space,
Meneth but a maner dethe, what wey we trace;
And ryghtfull folke shul goo whan that they die
To Hevene; and shewed hym the Galoxye.

Than shewede he hym the lytele erthe that here is,
At regarde of Hevenes quantyté;
And aftir shewed hym the nyne speris;
And aftir that the melodye herd he,
That cometh of thilke speres thries thre,
That welleys of musyke *ben* and melodye
In this worlde here, and cause of armonye.

Than bad he hym, seethe Erthe *was here* so lite,
And fulle *of turment, and* of harde grace,
That he ne shuld hym in the world delyte.
Than tolde he hym, in certeyne yeres space,
That every sterre shulde come into his place,
There hit was first; and al shal out of mynde,
That in this worlde was doon of al mankynde.

Than prayed he Scipion telle hym al*le*
The wey to come *unto that* Hevene blysse:
And he seyde: 'Knowe thy selfe firste *im*mortalle,
And loke ay besely thou werke and wysse
To comune profyte, and thou shalt never mysse
To come swiftely unto that place dere,
That ful of blysse ys, and *of* soules clere.

'But brekers of the lawe, soth for to seyne,
And lecherous folke, after that they be dede,

Shul alwey whirle aboute therthe in peyne,
Til many a worlde be passed, out of drede;
And than foryeven hem al hir wikked dede,
Than shul they come unto that blysful place,
To which to come God sende ech lover grace.'

The day gan failen, and the derke nyght,
That reveth bestes from her besynesse,
Berefte me my boke for lake of lyght,
And to my bed I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfilled of thought and besy hevynesse;
For bothe I hadde thinge which that I nolde,
And eke I ne hadde thyng that I wolde.

But fynally my spiryte at the laste
For-wery of my labour al the day,
Tooke rest, that made me to slepe faste;
And in my slepe I mette, as *that* I lay,
How Aufrikan, ryght in that selfe aray
That Scipion hym sawe before that tyde,
Was comen, and stoode ryght at my beddys side.

The wery hunter slepynge in hys bed,
To woode ayeine hys mynde gooth anoon;
The juge dremeth how hys plees ben sped;
The cartar dremeth how his cartes goone;
The ryche of golde, the knyght fyght with his fone;
The seke meteth he drynketh of the tonne;
The lover meteth he hath hys lady wonne.

Can not I seyne yf that the cause were,
For I redde had of Aufrikan beforne,
That *made* me to mete that he stood there;

But thus seyd he: 'Thou hast the so wel borne
In lokynge of myn olde booke al to-torne,
Of which Macrobye roght noght a lyte,
That somedel of thy labour wolde I the quyte.'

Cytherea, thou blysful lady swete!
That with thy firy bronde dauntest whom the lest,
And madest me thys swevene for to mete,
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best!
As wisly as I sawe the northe northe west,
When I beganne my swevene for to write,
So yeve me myght to ryme and to endyte.

This forseyde Aufrikan me hent anoone,
And forthwith hym unto a gate me broghte
Ryght of a parke, walled with grene stoone;
And over the gate, with letres large ywroght,
There were verses writen, as me thoghte,
On eyther halfe, of ful grete difference,
Of whiche I shal yow seye the pleyn sentence:—

'Thorgh me men goon into that blysful place,
Of hertes hele and dedely woundes cure;
Thorgh me men goon unto the welle of grace,
There grene and lusty May shal ever endure;
This is the wey to al good aventure;
Be glad, thou reder, and thy sorwe of caste;
Al open am I, passe in and hye the faste.'

'Thorgh me men goon,' thanne spake that other side,
'Unto the mortale strokes of the spere,
Of which disdayne and daunger is the gyde,
There tree shal never frute ne leves bere;
This streme yow ledeth unto the sorwful were,

There as the fyssh in prisoun is al drye;
Thesc*he*wing ys only the remedye.'

These verse*s* of golde and blake ywryten were,
Of which I gan astoune*d*e to beholde;
For with that oon encresed ay my fere,
And with that other gan myn hert to bolde;
That oon me hette, that other dide me colde;
No wytte had I, for errour, for to chese,
To entre or flee, or me to save or lese.

Ryght as betwix adamauntes twoo
Of evene *w*yght, a pece of iren ysette
Ne hath no myght to meve to nor fro;
For what that one may hale that other lette:
So ferde I, that I ne wiste wher that me was bette
To entre or leve, til Aufrikan, my gyde,
Me hente and shoofe in at the gates wyde.

And seyde, 'Hyt stondeth writen in thy face,
Thyn errour, though thou tel*le* hyt not me;
But drede the not to come into this place;
For this writynge ys nothing ment be the,
Ne be noon but he Loves servant be;
For thou of love hast lost thy taste, y gesse,
As seke man hath of swete and bitternesse.

'But natheles, although that thou be dulle,
That thou canst not do, yet thou maist hyt se;
For many a man that may not stonde a pulle,
Yet lyketh hym at the wrastelynge to be,
And demeth yit, whethir he do bet, or he;
And, yf thou haddest kunnynge for to endite,
I shal the shewen mater of to wryte.'

And with that my honde in hys he toke anoon,
Of which I comfort kaught, and went in faste.
But Lorde! so I was glad and wel begoon!
For over al, where I myn eyen caste,
Weren trees clad with levys that ay shal laste,
Eche in his kynde, with coloure fressh and grene
As emerawde, that joy was for to sene.

The bylder oke, and eke the hardy asshe,
The peler elme, the cofre unto careyne,
The box pipe tree, holme to whippes lasshe,
The saylynge firre, the cipresse deth to pleyne,
The sheter ewe, the aspe for shaftes pleyne,
The olyve of pes, and eke the drunken vyne,
The victor palme, the laurere, to, devyne.

A gardyn sawh I ful of blossomed bowis,
Upon a ryver, in a grene mede,
There as swetnes evermor ynowh is,
With floures white, blew, yelow, and rede,
And colde welle stremes, nothinge dede,
And swymmynge ful of smale fisshes lyghte,
With fynnes rede, and scales sylver bryghte.

On every bowgh the briddes herde I synge,
With voys of aungel in her armony,
That besyed hem her briddes forthe to brynge;
The lytel conyes to her pley gunnen hye;
And further abouten I gan espye,
The dredful roo, the buk, the hert, and hynde,
Squerels, and bestis smale, of gentil kynde.

On instrumentes of strynges in acorde
Herde I so pley a ravysshinge swetnesse,

That God, that maker ys of al and Lorde,
Ne herde never bettir, as I gesse:
Therewith a wynde, unnethe hyt myghte lesse,
Made in the leves grene a noyse softe,
Accordant to the foulys songe on lofte.

The aire of that place so attempre was,
That never was grevance therof hoot ne colde·
Ther growen eke every holsome spice and gras,
Ne no man may there wexe seke ne olde:
Yet was there more joy a thousande folde
Than man kan telle, never wolde hyt nyght,
But ay clere day, to any mannys syght.

Under a tree, besyde a welle, I say
Cupide our lorde hys arwes forge and fyle;
And at hys fete hys bowe alredy lay;
And welle hys doghtre tempred, al the while,
The heddes in the welle; and with harde file
She couched hem after, as they shul*de* serve
Somme to slee, and somme to wounde and kerve.

Thoo was I war of Pleasaunce anon ryght,
And of Array, and Lust, and Curtesye,
And of the Crafte, that kan and hath the myght
To *doo* be force a wyght to do folye:
Dysfigured was she, I shal not lye:
And by hym selfe, under an oke I gesse,
Sawgh I Delyte, that stoode with Gentilesse.

Than sawgh I Beauté, with *a nice* atire,
And Yowthe, ful of game and jolyté,
Fool-hardynesse, Flatery, and Desire,
Messagery, Mede, and other thre;

Her names shul noght *here* be tolde for me:
And upon pelers grete, of jasper longe,
I sawgh a temple of glas ifounded stronge.

About the temple ther daunced alway
Wommen ynow, of whiche somme *there* were
Faire of hemself, and somme of hem *were* gay;
In kirtels al dishevele went*e* they there;
That was hir office alwey, fro yere to yere:
And on the temple saugh I, white and faire,
Of dowves white many a hundred paire.

Before the temple dore, ful soberly,
Dame Pes sate, a curtyne in hir hande;
And hir beside, wonder discretly,
Dame Pacience sittynge ther I fonde,
With face pale, upo*n* an hille of sonde;
And alder next, within and *eke* withoute,
Behest and Arte, and of her folke a rowte.

Withyn*ne* the temple of syghes, hoote as fire,
I herde a swogh, that gan aboute renne;
Whiche syghes were engendred with desire,
That maden every auter for to brenne
Of newe flawme; and *wel* aspyed I thenne,
That al the cause of sorwes that they drye
Come of the bitter goddysse Jalousye.

The god Priapus sawgh I as I wente
Withyn*ne* the temple, in soverayne place, stonde
In suche array, as whanne the asse hym shente
With crie by nyght, and with his ceptre in honde.
Ful besely men gunne assay and fonde,
Upon his hede to sette, of sondry hewe,
Garlondes ful*le* of fresshe floures newe.

And in a prevy corner, in disporte
Fond I Venus and hir porter Rychesse,
That was ful noble and hawteyn of hir porte;
Derke was that place, but, afterward, lyghtnesse
I saugh a lyte, unnethe hyt myghte be lesse;
And on a bed of golde she lay to reste,
Til that the hoote Sonne gan to weste.

Hir gilte heeres with a golde threde
Ybounden were, untressed as she lay;
And naked fro the brest unto the hede
Men myght hir see; and, sothely for to saye,
The remenant kovered wel, to my paye,
Ryght with a subtil keverchefe of Valence;
There was no thikker clothe of defence.

The place yafe a thousande savours swoote,
And Bacus, god of wyne, sate hir beside;
And Ceres next, that dooth of hunger boote;
And, as I seide, amyddes lay Cupide,
To whom on knees the yonge folkes criede
To ben hir helpe; but thus I lete hir lye,
And ferther in the temple I gan espye,

That, in dyspite of Diané the chaste,
Ful many a bowe ybroke henge on the walle,
Of maydens, suche as gonne hyr times waste
In hir servise: and peynted over alle,
Of many a storye, of which I touche shalle
A fewe, as of Calixte, and Athalante,
And many a mayde, of which the name I wante.

Semyramus, Candace, and Ercules,
Biblys, Dido, Tesbe, and Piramus,

Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles,
Eleyne, Cleopatre, and Troylus,
Silla, and eke the moder of Romulus:—
Alle these were peynted on that other syde,
And al her love, and in what plite they dide.

Whan I was comen ayen into that place
That I of spake, that was so swoote and grene,
Forth welke I thoo my selven to solace:
Tho was I war, where ther sate a quene,
That, as of lyght the somer sonne shene
Passeth the sterres, ryght so over mesure,
She fairer was than any creature.

And in a launde, upon an hille of floures,
Was sette this noble goddesse Nature;
Of braunches were hir halles and hir boures
Ywrought, aftir hir crafte and hir mesure;
Ne ther nas foule that cometh of engendrure,
That there ne were prest, in hir presence,
To take hir dome, and yeve hir audience.

For this was on seynt Valentynes day,
Whan every foule cometh there to chese his make,
Of every kynde that menne thynke may;
And that so huge a noyse gan*ne* they make,
That erthe, and see, and tree, and every lake,
So ful was, that unnethe was ther space
For me to stonde, so ful was al the place.

And ryght as Alayne, in the Pleynt of Kynde,
Devyseth Nature of suche array and face;
In suche array men myght hir there *y*fynde.

This noble emperesse, ful of *alle* grace,
Bad every foule to take her oune place,
As they were wont alwey, fro yere to yere,
Seynt Valentynes day to stonden there.

That ys to seye, the fowles of ravyne
Were hyest sette; and than the foules smale,
That eten, as that nature wolde enclyne,
As worme or thynge, of whiche I tel*le* no tale;
But watir foule sate lowest in the dale,
And foule, that lyveth by seede, sate on the grene,
And that so fele, that wonder was to sene.

There myght*e* men the royal egle fynde,
That with his sharpe looke perceth the Sonne;
And other egles of a lower kynde,
Of which that clerkes wel devysen konne;
There was the tiraunt with his fethres donne
And grey, I mene the goshauke that doth pyne
To briddes, for his outrageous ravyne.

The gentil faucoune, that with his fete distreyneth
The kynges honde; the *hardy* sperhauke eke,
The quayles foo; the merlyon that peyneth
Hymself ful ofte the larke for to seke;
There was the dowve, with hir eyen meke;
The jalouse swanne, ayens hys deth that syngeth;
The owle eke, that of dethe the bode bryngeth.

The crane, the geaunte, with his trompes soune:
The thefe the choghe, and eke the janglynge pye;
The scornyng jay, the *eles* foo *the* herounne;
The false lapwynge, ful of trecherye;

The stare, that the counseylle kan bewrye;
The tame ruddok, and the cowarde kyte;
The cok, that orlogge ys of thropes lyte.

The sparow, Venus' sone, and the nyghtyngale
That clepeth forth the fresshe leves newe;
The swalow, mordrer of the *bees* smale,
That maken hony of floures fressh of hewe;
The wedded turtel, with hys herte trewe;
The pecok, with his aungels fethers bryghte;
The fesaunt, scorner of the cok be nyghte.

The waker goos, the cukkow ever unkynde,
The papinjay, ful of delycacye;
The drake, stroyer of hys owne kynde;
The storke, wreker of avowtrie;
Tho hoote cormeraunte, *ful* of glotonye;
The ravenes and the crowes, with her voys of care;
The throstel olde, *and* the frosty feldefare.

What shulde I seyn? Of foules every kynde,
That in this worlde han fetheres and stature,
Men myghte in that place assembled fynde,
Before that noble goddesse of Nature;
And eche of hem did hys besy cure
Benyngly *for* to chese, or for to take,
By hir accorde, hys formel or hys make.

But to the poynte:—Nature helde on hir honde
A formel egle, of shappe the gentileste
That ever she amonge hir werkes fonde,
The moste benigne, and *eke the* goodlyeste
In hir was every vertu at his rest,

So ferforthe that Nature hir selfe had*de* blysse,
To looke on hir and ofte hir beke to kysse.

Nature, the vyker of thalmyghty Lorde,
That hoot, colde, hevy, lyght, moiste, and drye,
Hat*h* knyt, by evene noumbre of accorde,
In esy vois, began to speke and seye,
'Foules take *hede* of my sentence I preye;
And for youre ease, in furtherynge of youre nede,
As faste as I may speke I wol me spede.

'Ye knowe wel how *on* Seynt Valentynes day,
Be my statute, and thorgh my governaunce,
Ye come for to chese and flee your way
With youre makes, as I prik yow with plesaunce;
But natheles, my ryghtful governaunce,
May I not lett*e*, for al this worlde to wynne,
That he that moste ys worthy shal begynne.

'The tercel egel, as that ye knowen wele
The foule royal, aboven yow in degree,
The wyse and worthy, secré, trewe as stele,
The whiche I have formed, as ye may se,
In every parte, as hit best lyketh mee,—
Hyt nedeth noght his shappe yow to devyse,—
He shal first chese, and speken in his gyse.

'And after hym, by order shul ye chese,
Aftir youre kynde, everyche as yow lyketh;
And as youre happe ys, shul ye wynne or lesse;
But which of yow that love moste entriketh,
God sende hym hyr, that sorest for hym syketh:'—
And therewythalle the tercel gan she calle,
And seyde, 'My sone, the choys is to the falle.

'But natheles, in thys condicioun
Mote be the choys of everych that ys here,
That she agree to hys eleccioun,
Who-so he be, that shulde ben hir fere;
This is oure usage alwey, fro yere to yere;
And who-so may at this tyme have hys grace,
In blisful tyme he come into this place.'

With hed enclyned and with ful humble chere,
This real tercel spake, and taried noght:—
'Unto my sovereyne lady, and noght my fere,
I chese and chesse, with wille, and hert, and thought,
The formel on youre honde, so wel ywrought,
Whos I am alle, and ever wol hir serve,
Doo what hir lyste, to doo me lyve *or* sterve.

'Besechynge hir of mercy and of grace,
As she that ys my lady sovereyne,
Or let me dye here present in thys place,
For certes longe may I not lyve in peyne,
For in myn herte ys korven every veyne;
Havynge rewarde oonly to my trouthe,
My dere herte, have on my woo somme routhe.

'And yf I be founde to hir untrewe,
Disobeysaunt, or wilful negligent,
Avauntour, or in processe love a newe,
I pray to yow thys be my jugement,
That with these foules Y be al to-rent,
That ylke day that ever she me fynde
To hir untrewe, or in my gylte unkynde.

'And syn that noon loveth hir so wel as I,
Althogh she never of love me behette

Than oght she be myn thorugh hir mercy,
For other bonde kan I noon on hir knette:
For never for no woo, ne shal I lette
To serven hir, how ferre so that she wende:
Sey what yow lyste, my tale ys at an ende.'

Ryght as the fresshe rede rose newe
Ayene the somer sonne coloured ys;
Ryght so, for shame, al wexen gan the hewe
Of thys formel, whan she herde al thys;
Neyther she answerde wel, ne seyde amys,
So sore abasshed was she; til that Nature
Seyde 'Doghter drede yow noght, I yow assure.'

Another tercel egle spake anoon
Of lower kynde, and seyde that shulde not be:—
'I love hir bet than ye do, by seynt Johan!
Or atte lest I love hyr as wel as ye,
And lenger have served hir in my degré;
And yf she shulde have loved for long lovyng,
To me allone had*de* ben the guerdonynge.

'I dar eke seye, yf she me fynde fals,
Unkynde jangler, or rebel in any wyse,
Or jalouse, do me hongen by the hals;
And but I bere me in hir servise
As wel as my wytte kan me suffise,
Fro poynt to poynt hir honour for to save,
Take she my lyfe and al the good I have.'

The thirdde tercel egle answerde thoo,
'Now sirs, ye seen the lytel leyser here;
For every foule cryeth out to ben agoo
Forth with hys make, or with hys lady dere:

And eke *Nature* hir selfe ne wol noght here,
For taryinge here, noght half that I wolde seye,
And but I speke, I mote for sorwe deye.

'Of longe servise avaunte I me nothinge,
But as possible ys me to dye to day
For woo, as he that hath ben langwysshynge
Thise twenty wynter, and wel happen may,
A man may serven bette, and more to paye
In halfe a year, although hyt were no more
Than somme man dooth that hath served *ful* yore.

'I ne say not thys by me, for I ne kan
Do no servise that may my lady plese;
But I dar say I am hir trewest man,
As to my dome, and faynest wolde hir plese
At shorte wordes, til that deth me sese,
I wol ben hirse, whethir I wake or wynke,
And trew in al that herte may bethynke.'

Of al my lyfe, syn that day I was borne,
So gentil plee in love or other thinge,
Ne herde never no man me beforne;
Who-*so* that hadde leyser and kunnynge
For to rehersen hir chere and her spekynge:
And from the morwe gan this speche laste,
Til dounward wente the sonne wonder faste.

The noyse of foules for to ben delyvered
So lowde ronge, 'Have doon and let us wende,'
That wel wende I the woode had al to-shyvered:
'Come of!' they cride, 'allas, ye wolle us shende!
Whan shal youre cursed pledyng have an ende?

How shulde a juge eyther party leve,
For yee or nay, withouten any preve?'

The goos, the duk, and the cukkowe also,
So criden, 'Kek, kek, Kukkow, Quek quek hye,'
That thorgh myn eres the noyse wente tho.
The goos seyde tho 'Al thys nys worthe a flye!
But I kan shape herof a remedye,
And wol seye my veyrdit, faire and swythe,
For watir foule, whoso be wrothe or blythe.'

'And I for worme foule,' seyde the foole cukkowe;
'For I wol, of myn oune auctorité,
For comune spede, take on me the charge nowe;
For to delyveren us, is grete charité.'
'Ye may abyde a while yet pardé,'
Quod the turtel; 'yf hyt be youre wille
A wyght may speke, hym were as good be stille.

'I am a sede foule, oon the unworthieste,
That wot I wel, and lytel of kunnynge;
But better ys that a wightys tonge reste,
Than entremete hym of suche doynge
Of which he neyther rede kan nor synge;
And who-so hyt dothe, ful foule hymself acloyeth,
For office uncommytted ofte anoyeth.'

Nature, which that alway had an ere
To murmour of the lewdenesse behynde,
With facound voys seyde, 'Holde your tonges there,
And I shal soone, I hope, a counseylle fynde,
Yow for to delyveren, and from this noyse unbynde:

I jugge of every *flocke ye* shal one calle,
To seyne the veirdit *of* yow foules alle.'

Assented were to thys conclusyoun
The briddes alle: and the foules of ravyne
Han chosen first, by pleyne eleccioun,
The tercelet of the faucoun to dyffyne
Al her sentence, and as hym lyst to termyne;
And to Nature hym gonnen to presente,
And she accepteth hym with glad entente.

The tercelet seyde thanne in this manere:—
'Ful harde were hyt to preven hyt by resoun,
Who loveth best this gentil formel here;
For everych hath suche replicacioun,
That by skylles may non be broght adoun;
I kannot seen that argumentys avaylle,
Than semeth hit ther moste be bataylle.'

'Al redy!' quod these egles tercels thoo.
'Nay, sirs,' quod he, 'yf that I dorst hyt seye,
Ye doon me wrong, my tale ys not ydoo:
For sirs, taketh noght a-grefe, I praye,
Hyt may nought be as ye wolde, in thys weye:
Oures ys the voys that han the charge in honde,
And to the juges doome ye moten stonde.

'And therfore Pes! I seye. As to my witte,
Me wolde think, how that the worthieste
Of knyghthode, and lengest had used hitte,
Moste of estaate, of blode the gentyleste,
Were syttynge for hir, yf that hir leste;

And of these three she woote hir-selfe, I trowe,
Which that he be, for hyt is lyght to knowe.'

The watir foules han her hedes leyde
Togedir, and of shorte avysement,
Whan everych had hys large goler seyde,
They seyden sothely al by on assent,
How that the goos, with hir faucond gent,
That soo desireth to pronounce oure nede,
Shal telle oure tale, and preyde to God hir spede.

And for these watir foules tho began
The goos to speke, and in hir cakelynge.
She seyde, 'Pes now, take kepe every man,
And herkeneth which a resoun I shal forth bringe!
My wytte ys sharpe, I love no taryinge!
I sey Y rede hym, though he were my brother,
But she wol love hym, lat hym love another.'

'Loo! here a parfyte resoun of a goos!'
Quod the sperhauke. 'Never mote she thee!
Loo, suche a *thing* hyt ys to have a tonge loos!
Now pardé, foole, yet were hit bet for the
Have holde thy pes, than shewede thy nyceté;
Hyt lyth not in hys wytte, nor in hys wille;
But sooth ys seyde, a foole kan noght be stille.'

The laughtre aroose of gentil foules alle,
And ryght anoone the sede foules chosen hadde
The turtel trewe, and ganne hir to hem calle;
And prayden hir to seye the sothe sadde
Of thys matere, and asked what she radde.

And she ansuerde, that pleynly hyr entente
She wolde shewe, and sothely what she mente.

'Nay, God forbede a lover shulde chaunge!'
The turtel seyde, and wexe for shame al rede:
'Thoogh that hys lady evermore be straunge,
Yet let hym serve hir ever, tyl he be dede.
Forsoth, I preyse noght the gooses rede;
For thoygh she deyed, I wolde noon other make;
I wol ben hirs til that the deth me take.'

'Wel bourded,' quod the duk, 'by my hatte!
That men shulden alwey loven causeles,
Who kan a resoun fynde, or wytte in that?
Daunceth he murye that ys murtheles?
Who shulde rechche of that ys rechcheles?
Ye! quek *yet*,' quod the duk, 'ful wel and faire!
There ben moo sterres, God woot, than a paire.'

'Now fye cherle!' quod the gentil tercelet,—
'Out of the dunghille come that word ful ryght;
Thou kanst noght see which thing is wel beset;
Thou farest be love as owles doon by lyght,—
The day hem blent, ful wel they see by nyght;
Thy kynde ys of so lowe a wrechednesse,
That what love is thou kanst neyther see ne gesse.'

Thoo gan the cukkow put hym forth in pres
For foule that eteth worme, and seyde blyve:—
'So I,' quod he, 'may have my make in pes,
I *ne* reche not how longe that ye strive.
Lat ech of hem be soleyne al her lyve,

This ys my rede, syne they may not acorde;
This shorte lessoun nedeth noght recorde.'

'Yee, have the glotoun filde ynogh hys paunche
Thanne are we wel!' seyde the emerlyoun:—
'Thou mordrere of the haysogge on the braunche
That broghte the forth! thou rewful glotoun!
Lyve thou soleyn, wormes corrupcioun!
For no fors ys of lake of thy nature;
Goo, lewde be thou while the worlde may dure!'

'Now pes,' quod Nature, 'I commaunde here,
For I have herde al youre opynyoun,
And in effecte yet be we never the nere;
But fynally, this ys my conclusyoun,—
That she hir selfe shal have hir eleccioun
Of whom hir lyste, who-so be wrooth or blythe;
Hym that she cheest, he shal han hir as swithe.

'For syth hyt may not here discussed be
Who loveth hir best, as seyde the tercelet,
Than wol I doon thys favour to hir, that she
Shal have ryght hym on whom hir hert is sette;
And he hir, that hys hert hath on her knette:
This juge I, Nature, for I may not lye
To noon estaat, I have noon other eye.

'But as for counseylle for to chese a make,
Yf I were resoun, than wolde Y
Counseylle yow the royal tercel take,
As seyde the tercelet, ful skilfully,
As for the gentilest, and moste worthy,

Whiche I have wroght so wel to my plesaunce,
That to yow hyt ought to ben a suffisaunce.

With dredeful vois the formel hir answerde:
'My ryghtful lady, goddesse of Nature,
Sooth ys, that I am ever under youre yerde,
As ys everych other creature,
And moste be youres while my lyf may dure;
And therfore graunte me my firste boone,
And myn entent yow wol I seye ryght soone.'

'I graunte hyt yow,' quod she, and ryght anoon
This formel egle spake in thys degré:—
'Almyghty quene, unto this yere be doon
I aske respite for to avysen me;
And after that to have my choys al fre;
Thys al and somme that I wolde spek and seye;
Ye gete no more, although ye do me deye.

'I wolle noght serven Venus ne Cupide,
Forsoth as yet, by no maner weye.'
'Now syn hyt may noon other weyes betide,'
Quod Nature, 'here ys no more to seye:
Than wolde I that these foules were aweye,
Ech with hys make, for taryinge lenger here.'
And seyde hem thus, as ye shal after here.

'To yow speke I, yee terceletys,' quod Nature;
'Beth of good hert, and serveth alle thre;
A yere ys not so longe to endure,
And eche of yow peyne hym in hys degré
For to do wel; for, God wote, quyte ys she
Fro yow thys yere, what after so befalle;
This entremesse ys dressed for yow alle.'

And whan thys werke al *b*roght was to an ende,
To every foule Nature yafe hys make
By evene acorde, and on her wey they wende :
And, Lord ! the blysse and joy that they make !
For eche of hem gan other in *his* wynges take,
And with her nekkes eche gan other wynde,
Thonkyng alwey the noble goddesse of kynde.

But first were chosen foules for to synge,—
As yere by yere was alwey her usaunce,
To synge a roundel at her departynge,
To do Nature honour and pleasaunce;
The note, I trowe, maked was in Fraunce ;
The wordes were suche as ye may here fynde
The nexte vers, as I now have in mynde.
Qui bien ayme a tarde oublie.

' *Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,*
That haste this wynter wethers overshake;
Saynt Valentyne, thou arte ful hye on lofte,
Whiche drivest away the longe nightes blake; —
Thus syngen smale foules for thy sake—
Wel have they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sens eche of hem recovered hath his make,
Ful blisful may they sinġe whan they awake.'

And with the showtynge whan hir song was do,
That *the* foules made at her flyght away,
I wooke, and other bookes toke me to
To rede upon; and yet I rede alway.
I hope ywyse to rede so somme day,
That I shal mete sommethyng for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I wol not spare.

EXPLICIT.

THE BOKE OF CUPIDE, GOD OF LOVE,

OR THE

CUCKOW AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

THE god of love, ah! benedicite,
How myghty and how grete a lorde is he!
For he can make of lowe hertys hie,
And highe *hertes* low, and like for to die,
And hȣrde hertis he can make free.

And he can make, within a lytel stounde,
Of seke folke ful fresh, hool and sounde,
And of hoole *folke* he can make seke;
He can bynde, and *wel* unbynden eke,
What he wole have bounden *or* unbounde.

To telle his myght my wit may not suffice,
For he can make of wise folke ful nyse,
For he may do al that he can devyse,
And in lithere folke dystroye vise,
And proude hertys he can make agryse.

Shortely al that evere he wol he may,
Ayenst him ther dar no wight seye nay;

For he can glade and greve whom him lyke,
And whom that he wol, don hym laughe or sike,
And most his myght he sheweth ever in May.

For every trewe gentil herte and fre,
That with him is, or thinketh *for* to be,
Ayens May now shal have somme sterynge,
Other to joy, or elles to some morenynge,
In no sesoun so grette, as thynketh me.

For then they mowe here the briddes singe,
And see the floures and the leves springe,
That *bringeth* into hertes remembraunce
A maner ease, ymedled with grevaunce,
And lusty thoghtes ful of grete longynge.

And of that longynge cometh hevynesse,
And thereof groweth oft *tyme* grete seknesse,
And *al* for lak of that *that* they desyre:
And thus in May ben hertys set on fire,
And so they brenne forthe in grete distresse.

I speke *al* this of felyng truly;
For althogh I be olde and unlusty,
Yet have I felte of that sekenes in May
Bothe hote and colde, an acces every day,
How sore, ywis, ther wot no wight but I.

I am so *shaken* with the feveres white,
Of al this May yet slept I but a lyte;
And also hit *ne liketh noght* to me
That eny herte shulde slepy be,
In whom that Love his firy dart wol smyte.

But as I lay this other nyght wakynge,
I thoght how lovers had a tokenynge,
And among hem hit was a comune tale,
That hit wer good to here the nyghtyngale,
Rather then the leude cukkow synge.

And then I thoght anoon, as hit was daye,
I wolde goo somme whedir for to assaye
Yf that I myght a nyghtyngale here;
For yet I non had herd of al this yere
And hit was *tho* the thirde nyght of May.

And *right* anoon as I the day espiede,
No lenger wolde I in my bed abyde;
But unto a wode that was fast by,
I wente forthe allone *ful* prively,
And helde my way doun *by* a broke syde.

Til I come into a launde of white and grene,
So feire oon had I nevere in bene,
The grounde was grene, *y*poudred with daysé,
The floures and the gras ilike al hie,
Al grene and white, was nothing elles sene.

Ther sat I doune amonge the feire floures,
And saw thee briddes crepe out of her boures,
Ther as they had rested hem al *the* nyght;
They were so joyful of the dayes lyght,
That they beganne of Mayes ben ther houres.

They coude that servise alle bye rote;
Ther was *also* mony a lovely note!
Somme songe loude as they hadde pleyned,
And somme in other maner voys yfeyned,
And somme al oute with a lowde throte.

They pruned hem, and made hem ryght gay,
And daunseden and lepten on the spray;
And evermore two and two in fere,
Ryght so as they hadde chosen hem to-yere
In *Feverere* upon seynt Valentynes day.

And the ryver that *then* I sat upon,
Hit made suche a noyse as hit *ther* ron,
Acordaunt to the foules ermonye,
Me thoght hit was the beste melodye
That myghte be herd of eny *lyvyng* man.

And for delyte, I *ne* wote never how,
I fel in such a slombre and a swowe,—
Nat al on slepe, ne fully *al* wakyng,—
And in that swowe me thoght I herde singe
That sory bridde the lewede cukkowe,

And that was on a tre right faste bye.
But who was then evel apayed but I?
'Now God,' quod I, 'that died upon the croise,
Yive sorowe on the, and on thy foule voys!
For lytel joy have I now of thy crie.'

And as I with the cukkow gan *to* chide,
I herde, in the nexte busshes beside,
A nyghtyngale so lustely singe,
That with her clere voys she made rynge
Thro out alle the grene wode wide.

'A! goode nyghtyngale,' quod I thenne,
'A lytelle hast thou be to longe henne,
For her hath be the lewede cukkow,
And songen songes rather then *hast* thou:
I prey to God that evel fire him brenne!'

But now I wil yow tel a wonder thynge:
As longe as I lay in that swo*w*nynge,
Me thoght I wist al that the briddes mente,
And what they seyde, and what was her entente,
And of her speche I hadde good knouynge.

And then herd I the nyghtyngale seye:—
'Now, goode cukkow, go sommewhere thy weye
And let us that can synge *dwellen* here;
Fer every wight escheweth the to here,
Thy songes be so elynge, in gode feye.'

'What,' quoth she, 'what may the ayle now?
Hit thinketh me, I syng as wel as thow,
For my songe is bothe trewe and pleyne,
Al-thogh I cannot creke hit so in veyne,
As thou dost in thy throte, I wote ner how.

'And every wight may understonde me,
But, Nyghtyngale, so may they not *don* the,
For thou hast mony a *feyned* queint cry;
I have herd the seye, 'ocy, ocy;'
But who myghte wete what that shulde be?'

'O fole,' quoth she, 'wost thou not what that is?
When that I sey, ocy, ocy, iwisse,
Then mene I that I wolde wonder fayne,
That al tho were shamefully *is*layne,
That menen ought ayenes love amys.

'And also I wolde alle tho were dede,
That thenke not her lyve in love to lede,
For who that wol the god of love not serve,

I dar wel sey he is worthy for to sterve;
And for that skille, ocy, ocy, I *g*rede.'

'Ey!' quoth the cukkow, 'ywis this is a queynt lawe,
That eyther shal I love or elles be slawe
But I forsake al*le* suche companye;
For myn entent is neyther *for to* dye,
Ne while I lyve in loves *y*oke to drawe.

'For lovers be the folke that *ben on* lyve,
That moste disese han, and most unthrive,
And most enduren sorowe, wo, and care,
And at the lest failen of her welfaire:
What nedith hit ayenes treweth to strive?'

'What?' quoth she *tho*, 'thou art out of thy mynde!
How maist thou in thy cherles herte fynde
To speke of Loves servauntes in this wyse?
For in this worlde is noon so good servise
To every wyght that gentil ys of kynde;

'For therof truly cometh al goodnesse,
Al honour and al gentilnesse,
Worshippe, *and* ese, and *alle* hertys lust,
Perfyt joy, and ful ensured trust,
Jolité, plesaunce, and *eke* freshenesse,

'Lowelyhed, and trewe companye,
Semelyhed, largenesse, and curtesie,
Drede of shame and for to don amys:
For he that truly Loves servaunt ys,
Were lother be shamed then to dye.

'And that ys sothe al that *ever* I sey,

In that beleve I wil bothe lyve and deye,
And, Cukkow, so rede I the that thou do iwis.'
'Ye then,' quoth she, 'God let me never have blis,
If evere I *unto that* counseyl obeye!

'Nyghtyngale, thou spekest wonder feyre,
But, for al that, the sothe is the contreyre;
For loving in yonge folke is but rage,
And in olde *folk* hit is a grete dotage,
Who most hit useth, most he shal apeyre.

'For therof cometh mony an hevinesse,
Sorow and care, and mony a *grete* seknesse,
Dispite, debate, angre, and envye,
Repreve and shame, *un*trust, and jelosye,
Pride, and myschefe, povert, and wodenesse.

'What! Lovyng is an office of dispaire,
And oon thing is therin that ys not faire;
For who that geteth of love a lytil blysse,
But-*if* he be alway therby ywysse,
He may ful sone of age have his *haire*.

'And therfor, Nyghtyngale, holde the nye;
For, leve me wel, for al thy loude crie,
If thou fer *or* longe be fro thi make,
Thou shalt be as other that be forsake,
Then shalt thou haten love as wele as I.'

'Fye,' quoth she, 'on thi name and on the!
The god of love *ne* let the nevere ythe!
For thou art wors a thousand folde then wode,
For mony is ful worthie and ful good,
That had*de* be noght, ne had*de* love ybe.

'For Love his servant evermore amendeth,
And fro al *evele* tachches him defendeth,
And maketh him to brenne as eny fire,
In trouthe and in worschippeful desire,
And, whom him like*th*, joy ynogh him sendeth.'

'Ye Nyghtyngale,' he seyde, 'holde the *now* stille!
For Love hath no resoun but his wille;
For ofte sithe untrew folke he esith,
And trewe folke so bittirly displeseth,
That for defaute of grace he let hem spille.

'With suche a lorde wolde I never be,
For he is blynde *alwey* and may not se,
And when he lyeth he not ne when he fayleth.
And in this court ful selde trouthe avayleth,
So dyverse and so wilful *eke* ys he.'

Then toke I of the nyghtyngale kepe,
She kest a sighe out of her hert*e* depe,
And seyde, 'Alas, that I ever was bore!
I can for tene seye not oon worde more;'
And ryght with that she brast on for to wepe.

'Alas!' quoth she, 'my hert*e* wol to-breke
To here thus this false birdde speke
Of Love, and of his worshipful servyse.
Now, God of Love, thou helpe me in summe wise,
That I may on this cukkow ben awreke.'

Methought*e* then that I stert *up* anone,
And to the broke I ran and gatte a stone,

And at the cukkow hertely I caste;
And he for drede *gan* flye awey ful faste,
And glad was I when that he was igon.

And evermore the cukkow, as he fley,
He seyde, 'Farewel, farewel papyngay!
As thogh he had iscorned, *as* thoght me;
But ay I hunted him fro tre to tre,
Tille he was fer al out of syght away.

And then come the nyghtyngale to me,
And seyde, 'Frende, forsoth I thanke the,
That thou hast lyked me thus to rescowe;
And oon avowe to love I *wol* allowe,
That al this May I wol thy singer be.'

'I thanked her, and was ryght wel apayed:
'Yee,' quoth she, 'and be thou not amayed,
Thogh thou have herde the cukkow er then me;
For, if I lyve, hit shal amended be
The nexte May, yf I be not affrayed.

'And oon thing I wol rede the also,
Ne leve *thou* not the cukkow, loves fo,
For al that he hath seydé is strong lesinge.'
'Nay, *nay*,' quoth I, 'ther shal nothing me bringe
Fro love, and yet he doth me mekil wo.

'Yee? Use thou,' quoth she, 'this medecyne,
Every day this May er that thou dyne:—
Goo loke upon the fresshe flour the daysye,
And, thogh thou be for wo in poynt to dye,
That shal ful gretly lyssen the of thy pyne.

'And loke alwey that thou be good and trewe,
And I wol singe oon of *my* songes newe
For love of the, as loude as I may crie:'
And then she began this songe ful hye,
'I shrewe hem al that be to love untrewe.'

And when she had*de* songen hit out to the ende,
'Now fairewel,' quoth she, 'for I most*e* wende,
And, God of Love, that can ryght wel and may,
As mekil joy sende yow this day,
As ever yet he eny lover sende!'

Thus toke the nyghtyngale hir leve of me.
I pray to God he alway with her be,
And joy of love he sende her evermore,
And shilde us fro the cukkow and his lore,
For ther is non so fals a bridde as he.

Forthe she fley, the gentil nyghtyngale,
To all*e* the briddes that werene in the *d*ale,
And gat hem alle into a place yn fere,
And hem besought*en* that they wolde*n* here
Her dysese, and thus began her tale.

'Ye knowe wel, hit is not fro yow hidde,
How that the cukkow and Y *fast* have chidde,
Ever sithe *that* hit was dayes lyght;
I prey yow al*le* that ye do me ryght
Of that foule fals unkynde bridde.'

Then spake oon brid for al, by *oon* assent:—
'This mater asketh good avysement;
For we be fewe briddes her in fere,
And soth hit ys, the cukkow is not here,
And therfore we wol have a parlement.

'And therat shal be the egle our lorde,
And other perys that ben of recorde,
And the cukkow shal be after *ysent*;
And ther shal be yeven the jugement,
Or elles we shul make summe acorde.

'And this shal be, withouten any nay,
The morowe, seynte Valentynes day,
Under the maple that is feire and grene,
Before the chambre window of the Quene,
At Wodestok upon the grene lay.'

She thanked hem, and then her leve *she* toke,
And fleye into an hawthorne by the broke,
And ther she sate and songe upon the tre,
'Terme of *my* lyve love hath withholde me,'
So loude that I with that song awoke.

EXPLICIT.

O LEWDE boke, with thy foule rudenesse,
Sith thou hast neyther beauté ne eloquence,
Who hath the caused or yeve the hardynesse
For to appere in my ladyes presence?
I am ful siker thou knowest hyr benivolence,
Ful agreable to alle hir obeyinge,
For of al goode she is the beste lyvynge.

Alas! that thou ne haddest worthynesse,
To shewe to hir somme plesaunt sentence,
Sithen that she hath, thorgh hir gentilesse,
Acceptede the servant to hir digne reverence!
O! me repenteth that I *ne* hadde science,
And leyser als, to make the more florysshynge,
For of al goode she ys the beste lyvynge.

Beseche hir mekely with alle lowlynesse,
Though I be fer from hir in *myn* absence,
To thenke on my trouthe to hir and stidfastnesse,
And to abregge of my sorwes the violence,
Whiche caused ys, wherof knoweth your sapience,
She lyke amonge to notefye me hir lykynge;
For of alle goode she is the beste lyvynge.

LENVOYE.

Aurore of gladnesse, and day of lustynesse,
Lucerne a nyght with hevenly influence
Enlumyned, rote of beauté and goodenesse,
Suspiries which I effunde in silence!
Of grace, I beseche, alegge let your writynge
Now of al goode, syth ye be beste lyvynge.

EXPLICIT.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

WHEN that Phebus his chaire of gold so hie
Hadde whirled up the sterrie sky alofte,
And in the Boole was entred certainely:
When shoures sweet of raine discended softe,
Causing the ground, fele times and ofte,
Up for to give many an wholsome aire,
And every plaine was *eke* yclothed faire

With newe green, and maketh smalle floures
To springen here and there in field and mede;
So very good and wholsome be the shoures,
That it renueth that was old and dede
In winter time; and out of every sede
Springeth the herbe, so that every wight
Of this season wexeth *ful* glad and light.

And I, so glad of the season *thus* swete,
Was happed thus upon a certaine nighte:—
As I lay in my bed, sleepe ful unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne mighte
Rest, I ne wiste; for there nas earthly wight,
As I suppose, hadde more heartes ease
Than I, for I nadde sicknesse nor disease.

Wherefore I mervaile greatly of my selfe,
That I withouten sleepe so longe lay;
And up I rose three houres after twelfe,
Aboute the springing of the day;
And on I putte my geare and mine array,
And to a pleasaunt grove I gan *to* passe,
Long or the brighte Sonne up-risen was;

In which were okes greate, streight as a line,
Under the which the grasse, so fresh of hewe,
Was newly sprong; and an eight foot or nine
Every tree well fro his fellow grew,
With branches brode, lade with leves newe,
That sprongen out ayen the sunne shene,
Some very red, and some a glad light grene;

Which, as me thoughte, was right a plesant sight;
And eke the briddes songes for to here
Would have rejoyced any earthly wight;
And I that couthe not yet, in no manere,
Heare the nightingale of all the yeare,
Ful busily herkened with hart and eare,
If I her voice perceive coud any where.

And, at the last, a path of little breede
I found, that greatly hadde not used be;
For it forgrowen was with grasse and weede,
That well unneth a wight *ne* might it se:
Thoght I, 'This path some whider goth, pardé!'
And so I followede, till it me broughte
To right a pleasaunt herber, well ywrought,

That benched was, and *eke* with turfes newe
Freshly turved, whereof the grene gras,

So small, so thicke, so short, so fresh of hewe,
That most *y*like greene wool, I wot, it was:
The hegge also that yede in *this* compas,
And closed in all the greene herbere,
With sicamour was set and eglatere,

Wrethen in fere so well and cunningly,
That every branch and leafe grew by mesure,
Plaine as a bord, of *oon* height by and by.
I *ne segh* never thing, I you ensure,
So well *y*-done; for he that tooke the cure
It *for* to make, Y trow did all his peine
To make it passe alle tho that men have seine.

And shapen was this herber, roofe and all,
As *is* a prety parlour; and also
The hegge as thicke as *is* a castle wall,
That who that list withoute to stond or go,
Though he would all day prien to and fro,
He shoulde not see if there were any wighte
Within or no; but one within wel mighte

Perceive alle tho that yeden there withoute
Into the field, that was on every side
Covered with corne and grasse; that out of doubt,
Though one woulde seeke all the worlde wide,
So rich a fielde *ne* coude not be espide
On *any* coast, as of the quantitie;
For of alle good thing there was plentie.

And I that all this pleasaunt sight *ay* sie,
Thought sodainly I felte so sweet an aire
Com of the eglentere, that certainely

There is no heart, I deme, in such dispaire,
Ne with *no* thoughtes froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it shoulde soone have bote,
If it had ones felt this savour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,
I was of ware the fairest medler tree,
That ever yet in all my life I sie,
As full of blossomes as it mighte be;
Therein a goldfinch leaping pretile
Fro bough to bough; and, as him list, *gan* eete
Of buddes here and there and floures sweete.

And to the herber side *ther* was joyninge
This faire tree, of which I have you told;
And at the last the brid began to singe,
When he had eaten what he eate wolde,
So passing sweetly, that by manifolde
It was more pleasaunt than I coude devise.
And when his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so mery a note
Answered him, that all the woode rong
So sodainly, that, as it were a sote,
I stood astonied; so was I with the song
Thorow ravished, that till late and longe,
Ne wist I in what place I was, ne where;
And ay, me thoughte, she song even by mine ere.

Wherefore about I waited busily,
On every side, if *that* I her mighte see;
And, at the last, I gan full well aspie
Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
On the further side, even right by me,

That gave so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglentere full well.

Whereof I had*de* so inly great pleasure,
That, as me thought, I surely ravished was
Into Paradice, where *as* my desire
Was for to be, and no ferther to passe
As for that day; and on the sote grasse
I sat me downe; for, as for mine entent,
The bird*des* song was more convenient,

And more pleasaunt to me by many fold,
Than meat or drinke, or any other thing.
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome savours eke so comforting,
That, as I deme*de*, sith the beginning
Of th*ilke* world was never seene or than
So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat, the bird*des* harkening thus,
Me thought*e* that I heard*e* voices sodainly,
The most sweetest and most delicious
That ever any wight, I trow truly,
Heard in *here* life; for *sothe* the armony
And sweet accord was in so good musike,
That the voice*s* to angels most was like.

And at the last, out of a grove *faste* by,
That was right goodly and pleasant to sight,
I sie where there came, singing lustily,
A world of ladies; but, to tell aright
Here grete beautie, it lieth not in my might,
Ne *here* array; neverthelesse I shall*e*
Telle you a part, though I speake not of alle.

The surcotes white, of velvet wele sitting,
They were in clad, and the semes echone,
As it were a maner garnishing,
Was set with emeraudes, one and one.
But by and by *ful* many a riche stone
Was set on the purfiles, out of doute,
Of colors, sleves, and traines round aboute.

As greate pearles, round and orient*e*,
Diamondes fine, and rubies rede
And many another stone, of which I wente
The names now; and everich on her heade
A riche fret of gold, which, withoute dreade,
Was full of stately riche stones set;
And every lady had a chapelet

Upon her head of *floures* fresh and greene,
So wele *y*wrought and so mervellously,
That *soth* it was a noble sight to seene;
Some of laurer, and some full pleasantly
Hadde chapelets of woodbind, and sadly
Some of *agnus castus* were also
Chapelets freshe; but there were many tho

That song and daunced, eke ful soberly,
And all they yede in manner of compace;
But one there yede in mid the company,
Soole by her selfe; but alle followede the pace
Which that she kepte, whose heavenely *faire* face
So pleasaunt was, and her wele shape person,
That of beautie she past hem everichone.

And more richly beseene, by manifold,

She was also in every maner thing:
Upon her head, full pleasaunt to beholde,
A crowne of gold riche for any king:
A braunch of *agnus castus* eke bearing
In her hand; and to my sight truly,
She lady was of *al* the company.

And she began a roundell lustely,
That '*Suse le foyle, devers moy,*' men calle,
'*Seen et mon joly cuer est endormy;*
And than the company answered alle,
With voices sweet entuned, and so smalle
That it me thoughte the sweetest melody
That ever I heard in my life soothly.

And thus they came, dauncing and singing
Into the middest of the mede echone,
Before the herber where I was sitting;
And, God wot, me thought I was wel bigone;
For then I might avise hem one by one,
Who fairest was, who coude best dance or singe,
Or who most womanly was in alle thinge.

They hadde not daunced but a little throwe,
When that I hearde not ferre off sodainely,
So great a noise of thundering trumpes blowe,
As though it should have departed the skie;
And, after that, within a while I sie,
From the same grove where the ladies come oute,
Of men of armes coming such a route,

As alle the men on earth hadde ben assembled
In that place, wele horsed for the nones,
Stering so faste, that al the earth trembled:
But for to speake of riches and *of* stones,

And men and horse, I trow the large wones
Of Prestir John, ne all his tresorie,
Mighte not unneth have boght the tenth partie

Of *here* array: who so list heare more,
I shall rehearse so as I can a lite.
Out of the grove, that I of spake before,
I sie come first, all in *here* clokes white,
A company, that ware, for *here* delite,
Chapelets fresh of okes serialle,
Newly *y*spronge, and trumpets they were alle.

On every trumpe hanging a broad banere
Of fine tartarium ful richely bete;
Every trumpet his lordes armes bere;
About *here* neckes, with greate pearles sete,
Colleres brode; for cost they woulde not lete,
As it woulde seeme, for *here* scochones echone
Were set aboute with many a precious stone.

Here horse harneis was all white also.
And after *hem* next, in one company,
Came kinges of armes, and no mo,
In clokes of white cloth of gold richly;
Chapelets of greene on *here* heades on hie;
The crownes that they on *here* scochones bere,
Were set with pearle, ruby, and saphere,

And eke great diamondes many one:
But all *here* horse harneis and other geare
Was in a sute accordinge, everychone,
As ye have heard the foresaid trumpets were;
And, by seeming, they were nothing to lere,

And *here* guiding they dide so manerly.
And, after hem, came a great company

Of heraudes and pursevauntes eke,
Arrayed in clothes of whit velvette,
And, hardily, they were no thing to seke,
How they on hem shoulde the harneis sette;
And every man had on a chapelet;
Scochones and eke horse harneis, indede,
They had in sute of hem that before hem yede.

Next after hem camen, in armour bright
All save *here* heades, seemely knightes nine;
And every claspe and naile, as to my sight,
Of *here* harneis were of red golde fine;
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine
Were the trappores of *here* stedes stronge,
Wide and large, that to the ground dide honge.

And every bosse of bridle and paitrell
That hadde they, was worth, as I woulde wene,
A thousand pound; and on *here* heades, well
Dressed, were crownes of laurer grene,
The best *y*made that ever I hadde sene;
And every knight had after him riding
Three henshemen on him *ay* awaiting.

Of which every *first*, on a short tronchoun,
His lordes helme bare, so richly dight,
That the worst was worth the ransoun
Of *any* king; the second a shield bright
Bare at his *backe*; the thridde bare upright

A mightie spere, full sharpe *y*ground and kene,
And every child *eke* ware of leaves grene .

A fresh chapelet upon his haires brighte;
And clokes white of fine velvet they were;
Here steedes trapped and *arraied* righte,
Without difference, as *here* lordes were;
And after hem, on many a fresh corsere,
There came of armede knightes such a route,
That they bespradde the large field aboute.

And all they ware, after *here* degrees,
Chapelets newe made of laurer grene;
Some of *the* oke, and some of other trees,
Some in *here* hondes bare boughes shene,
Some of laurer, and some of okes kene,
Some of hauthorne, and some of *the* woodbind,
And many mo which I hadde not in mind.

And so they came, *here* horses freshly stering
With bloodie sownes of her trompes loude;
There sie I many an uncouth disguising
In the array of these knightes proude;
And at the last, as evenly as they coude,
They took *here* places in middes of the mede,
And every knight turned his horse hede

To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere
In the *arest*; and so justes began
On every part about*en*, here and there;
Some brake his spere, some drew down hors and manne;
Aboute the field astray the steedes ranne;

And, to behold *here* rule and governaunce,
I you ensure, it was a great pleasaunce.

And so the justes last an houre and more;
But tho that crowned were in laurer grene
Wan*ne* the prise; *here* dintes were so sore,
That there was none ayenst hem mighte sustene:
And the justing all was *y*left off clene,
And fro *here* horse the ninth alight anone,
And so did all the remnant everichone.

And forth they yede togider, twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy sight,
Toward the ladies on the greene plaine,
That song and daunced, as I saide now righte:
The ladies *tho*, soone as they goodly mighte,
They braken of bothe the song and dance,
And yede to meet hem with ful glad semblance.

And every lady tooke, full womanly,
By the *right* hond a knight, and forth they yede
Unto a faire laurer that stood fast by,
With leves lade, the boughes of great brede;
And to my dome there never was, indede,
Man that hadde seene halfe so faire a tree;
For underneath there might it well have be

An hundred persons, at *here* owne plesance,
Shadowed fro the heat of Phebus bright,
So that they shoulden have felt no grevaunce
Of raine ne haile that hem *ne* hurte mighte.
The savour eke rejoice would any wighte
That hadde be sicke or melancolius,
It was so very good and vertueus.

And with great reverence encline they lowe
To thilke tree so soot, and faire of hewe;
And after that, within a little throwe,
They beganne to singe and daunce of newe
Some song of love, some plaining of untrewe,
Envirouninge the tree that stood upright;
And ever yede a lady and a knight.

And at the last mine eye I caste aside,
And was ware of a lustie company
That came roming out of the field wide,
Hond in hond a knight and a lady;
The ladies all in surcotes, that richely
Purfiled were with many a rich stone,
And every knight of grene ware mantles on,

Embrouded well so as the surcotes were:
And everich had a chapelet on her hede,
Which dide right well upon the shining here,
I-made of goodly floures white and rede;
The knightes eke, that they in hond *gan* lede,
In sute of hem ware chapelets everychone,
And before hem wente minstrels many one.

As harpes, pipes, lutes, and sautry,
All in greene; and on *here* heades bare,
Of divers floures, made full craftely,
All in a sute, goodly chapelets they ware;
And, so dauncing, into the mede they fare.
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
Al oversprad with floures in compas.

Whereto they enclined everychone
With great reverence, and that full humbly;

And, at the laste, there began anone
A lady for to singe right womanly
A bargaret in praising the daisie;
For, as me thought, among her notes swete,
She said '*Si douse est la Margarete.*'

Than they all answered her in fere,
So passingly well, and so pleasauntly,
That *soth* it was a blisfull noise to here.
But, I not *how*, it happede suddainly
As aboute noone, the sonne so fervently
Waxe hote, that the pretie tendre floures
Hadde lost the beautie of her freshe colours,

Forshronke with heat; the ladies eke to-brent,
That they ne wiste where hem to bestowe;
The knightes swelte, for lack of shade nie shent;
And after that, within a little throwe,
The wind began so sturdily to blowe,
That down goeth alle the floures everichone,
So that in all the mede there laft not one;

Save such as succoured were among the leves
Fro every storme that mighte hem assaile,
Growing under hedges and thicke greves;
And after that there came a storme of haile
And raine in fere, so that, withouten faile,
The ladies ne the knightes nade o threed
Drie *upon hem*, so dropping was her weed.

And whan the storm was cleane passed away,
Tho *clad* in white that stoode under the tree,
They felte nothing of the great affray,
That they in greene without had in ybe;

To *hem* they yede for routhe and pité,
Hem to comfort after *here* greate disease,
So faine they were the helplesse for to ease.

Than was I ware how one of hem in grene
Had on a crowne, *ful* rich and wel sitting;
Wherefore I demed wel she was a quene,
And tho in greene on her were awaiting;
The ladies then in white that were comming
Towardes *hem*, and the knightes in fere,
Beganne hem to comfort, and make hem chere.

The queen in white, that was of great beauty,
Tooke by the hond the queen that was in grene,
And said, 'Suster, I have right great pitie
Of your annoy, and of the troublous tene,
Wherein ye and your company have bene
So long, alas! and if that it you please
To go with me, I shall do you the ease,

'In all the pleasure that I can or may;'
Whereof the tother, humbly as she mighte,
Thanked her; for in right ill array
She was with storm and heat, I you behighte;
And every lady, then anone right,
That were in white, one of *hem* took in grene
By the hond; which when the knightes hadde sene,

In like wise ech of *hem* tooke *hir* a knight
I-clad in greene, and forth with hem they fare,
Un-to an hegge, where they anon *gan* right
To make *here* justes, woulde they not spare
Boughes to hewe down, and eke trees square,

Wherwith they made hem stately fires greate,
To dry *here* clothes that were wringing weate.

And after that, of hearbes that there grewe,
They made, for blisters of the sunne brenning,
Very good and wholesome ointmentes newe,
Where that they yede the sicke fast anointing;
And after that they yede aboute gadering
Pleasaunt salades, which they made hem eate,
For to refresh *here* greate unkindly heate.

The lady of the Leafe then *gan* to praye
Her of the Floure (for so to my seeming
They shoulde be, as by *here* arraye)
To soupe with her, and eek, for any thing,
That she shoulde with her all her people bringe;
And she ayen, in right goodly manere,
Thanketh her of her most friendly cheare,

Saying plainely, that she would obaye
With all her hart all her commaundement;
And then anon, withoute lenger delaye,
The lady of the Leafe hath one ysent
For a palfray, *as* after her intent,
Arrayed well and faire in harneis of golde,
For nothing lacked, that to him long sholde.

And after that, to all her company
She made to purvey horse and every thing
That they needed; and then ful lustily,
Even by the herber where I was sitting,
They passed alle, so pleasantly singing,

That it would have comforted any wight.
But then I sie a passing wonder sight;

For then the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurer sete, and did her might
The whole service to singe longing to May,
All sodainly began to take her flight;
And to the lady of the Leafe, forthright,
She flew, and set her on her hond softly,
Which was a thing I marveled of greatly.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medler tree
Was fled for heat into the bushes colde,
Unto the lady of the Flower gan flee,
And on her hond he set him as he wolde,
And pleasauntly his winges gan to folde;
And for to singe they pained hem both, as sore
As they hadde do of all the day before.

And so these ladies rode forth a great pace,
And all the rout of knightes eke in fere;
And I that hadde seene all this wonder case,
Thought I would assay in some manere,
To knowe fully the trouth of this matere;
And what they were that rode so pleasantly.
And when they were the herber passed by,

I dreste me forth, and happede to mete anone
Right a faire lady, I you ensure;
And she come riding by herselfe alone,
All in white; with semblance ful demure
I *salued* her, and bad her good aventure
Might her befall, as I coude most humbly;
And she answerede, 'My doughter, gramercy!'

'Madame,' quod I, 'if that I durst enquere
Of you, I woulde faine, of that company,
Wite what they be that paste by this arbere?'
And she ayen answerede right friendly:—
'My faire doughter, all tho that passed here by
In white clothing, be servaunts everichone
Unto the Leafe, and I myselfe am one.

'See ye not her that crowned is,' quod she,
'All in white?'—'Madame,' quod I, 'yis:'
'That is Diané, goddesse of chastité;
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her *own* hond the braunch she beareth *iwis*,
That *agnus castus* men calle properly;
And alle the ladies in her company,

'Which as ye se of that hearb chapelets weare,
Be such as han kept alway hir maidenheed:
And alle they that of laurer chaplets beare,
Be such as hardy were, and manly indeed,—
Victorious name which never may be dede!
And alle they were so worthy of *here* honde,
That in her time none might hem withstonde.

'And tho that weare chaplets on *here* hede
Of fresh woodbind, be such as never were
To love untrue in word, *in* thought, ne dede,
But aye stedfast; ne for pleasaunce, ne fere,
Thogh that they shuld *here* hertes al to-tere,
Woulde *ne* flitte, but ever were stedfaste,
Til that *here* lives there asunder *braste*.'

'Now faire madame,' quod I, 'yet would I pray
Your ladiship, if that it mighte be,

That I mighte knowe, by some maner way,
(Sith that it hath *i*-liked your beauté,
The trouth of these ladies for to telle me);
What that these knightes be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and weare the flour?

'And why that some dide reverence to the tre,
And some unto the plot of floures faire?'
'With right good will, my fair doghter,' quod she,
'Sith your desire is good and debonaire;
Tho nine crowned be very exemplaire
Of all honour longing to chivalry;
And those certaine be called the Nine Worthy,

'Which ye may see *now* riding all before,
That in her time dide many a noble dede,
And for *here* worthinesse full oft have bore
The crowne of laurer leaves on *here* hede,
As ye may in your olde bookes rede;
And how that he that was a conquerour,
Hadde by laurer alway his most honour.

'And tho that beare bowes in *here* honde
Of the precious laurer so notable,
Be such as were, I woll ye understonde,
Noble knightes of the rounde table,
And eke the Douseperis honourable,
Which they beare*n* in signe of victory;
It is witnesse of *here* deedes mightily.

'Eke there be knightes old of the garter,
That in her time dide right worthily;
And the honour they dide to the laurer,

Is for by *it* they have *here* laud wholly,
Here triumph eke, and marshall glory;
Which unto *hem* is more parfit richesse,
Than any wight imagine can or gesse.

'For one leafe given of that noble tree
To any wight that hath done worthily,
And it be done so as it ought*e* to be,
Is more honour than anything earthly;
Witnesse of Rome that founder was truly
Of all knighthood and deed*es* marvelous;
Record I take of Titus Livius.

'And as for her that crowned is in greene,
It is Flora, of these floures goddesse;
And all that here on her awaiting beene,
It are such *folk* that loved idlenesse,
And not delite *hadde* of no businesse,
But for to hunt and hauke, and pley in medes,
And many other such idle dedes.

'And for the great*e* delite and pleasaunce
They have to the floure, and so reverently
They unto it do such *grete* obeisaunce
As ye may se.'—'Now faire Madame,' quod I,
'If I durst aske what is the cause and why,
That knight*es* have the signe of honour,
Wel rather by the leafe than by the flour?'

'Soothly, doughter,' quod she, 'this is the trouth:—
For knight*es* ever should*e* be persevering,
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,
Fro wele to better in all manner thing;

In signe of which, with leaves aye lasting
They be rewarded after *here* degré,
Whose lusty green may not appaired be,

'But aie keping *here* beautie fresh and greene;
For there nis storme that *ne* may hem deface,
Ne haile nor snow, *ne* winde nor frostes kene;
Wherfore they have this propertie and grace.
And for the floure, within a little space
Woll be *i*-lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no greevance may endure;

'And every storme will blow *hem* soone awaye,
Ne laste they not but for *oon* season;
That is the cause, the very trouth to saye,
That they maye not, by no way of reason,
Be put to no such occupation.'
'Madame,' quod I, 'with all mine whole servise
I thanke you now, in my most humble wise;

'For now I am acertained throughly,
Of every thing I desired to knowe.'
'I am right glad that I have said, sothly,
Ought to your pleasure, if ye wille me trowe,'
Quod she ayen, 'but to whom do ye owe
Your service? and which wolle ye honoure,
Tel me I pray, this yere, the Leafe or the Floure?'

'Madame,' quod I, 'though I *be* least worthy,
Unto the Leafe I owe mine observaunce:'
'That is,' quod she, 'right well done certainly;
And pray I God to honour you avaunce,
And kepe you fro the wicked remembraunce

Of Malebouch, and all his crueltie,
And all that good and well conditioned be.

'For here may I no lenger now abide,
I muste followe the greate company,
That ye maye see yonder before you ride.'
And *tho* forth, as I couthe, most humbly,
I tooke my leve of her, as she gan hie
After *hem* as fast as ever she mighte;
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh nighte,

And put all that I hadde seene in writing,
Under support of *hem* that lust it to rede.
O little booke, thou art so unconning,
How darst thou put thy-self in prees, for drede?
It is wonder that thou wexest not rede!
Sith that thou wost full lite who shall beholde
Thy rude language, ful boistously unfolde.

EXPLICIT.

TROYLUS AND CRYSEYDE.

INCIPIT LIBER PRIMUS.

I.

HE double sorowe of Troylus to tellen,
That was the kynge Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovynge how hise aventures fellen
From wo to wele, and after out of joye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro the.
Thesiphone, thou help me for tendite
This woful vers, that wepen as I write.

II.

To the clepe I, thow goddesse of torment!
Thow cruel *wighte*, sorowynge ever in peyne,
Help me, that am the sorowful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I kan, to pleyne:
For wel it sit, the sothe *al* for to seyne,
A woful wyght to han a drery feere,
And to a sorwful tale a sory chere.

III.

For I that God of Loves servaunt serve,
Ne dar to love for myn unliklynesse,

Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfore sterve,
So fer I am from his helpe in derkenesse;
But natheles, if this may done gladnesse
Unto any lovere, and his cause avaylle,
Have he my thonk, and myn be this travaille.

IV.

But ye lovers that bathen in gladdenesse,
If any drope of pité in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevynesse,
That ye han felt and on the adversité
Of other folk and thenketh how that ye
Han felt that Love dorste yow displese,
Or ye han wonne hym with to grete an ese.

V.

And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as *ye* may after heere,
That Love hem brynge in Hevene to solas.
And eke for me preyeth to God so deere,
That I have myght to shew, in som manere,
Swich peyne and wo, as Loves folk endure,
In Troilus unsely aventure.

VI.

And byddeth ek for hem that ben despeyred
In love, that nevere nyl recovered be:
And ek for hem that falsly ben apeyred
Thorwgh wikked tonges, be it he or sche:
Thus byddeth God, for his benignité,
To graunte hem sone out of this world to passe,
That ben despeyred out *of* loves grace.

VII.

And byddeth ek for hem that ben at ese,
That God hem graunte ay goode perseveraunce,
And sende hem myght hire loves *so* to plese,
That it to love be worschip and plesaunce:
For so hope I best my soule to avaunce,
To preye for hem that Loves servauntes be,
And write hire wo, and lyve in cherité.

VIII.

And for to have of hem compassyoun,
As though I were hire owne brother deere.
Now herkeneth with a goode entencioun,
For now wol I gone streght to my matere,
In whiche ye may the double sorwes here
Of Troilus, in lovynge of Criseyde,
And how that she forsoke him or sche deyede.

IX.

It is wele wist, how that the Grekes stronge
In armes with a thousand shippes wente
To Troye wardes, and the cité longe
Assegheden, nygh ten yer er they stente;
And in dyverise wise and oon entente,
The ravyshynge to wreken of Eleyne,
By Paris don, they wroughten al hire peyne.

X.

Now fel it so, that in the town ther was
Dwellynge a lord of grete autorité,
A grete devyn that cleped was Calkas,
That in science so expert was, that he

Knew wele that Troye sholde destroyed be,
By answer of his god, that hyghte thus,
Daun Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus.

XI.

So when this Calkas knew by calkulynge,
And ek by answer of this Apollo,
That Grekes sholden swiche a peple brynge,
Thorwgh whiche that Troye moste ben fordo,
He cast onon out of the town to go:
For wel wist he by sort that Troye sholde
Destroyed ben, ye, wold who-so or nolde.

XII.

For which for to departen softely,
Took purpos ful this for knowynge wyse,
And to the Grekes oost ful pryvely
He stal anon, and thei in courtays wyse
Hym deden bothen worschipp, and servyse,
In truste that he hath knowynge hem to rede
In every peril, which that is to drede.

XIII.

The noyse up rose when it was first aspied,
Thorwgh al the town, and generally was spoken,
That Calkas traitor fals fled was and allied
With hem of Grece; and casten to ben wroken
On him that falsly hadde his faith so broken,
And sayden that he and alle his kyn atoones
Ben worthy for to brennen alle fel and bones.

XIV.

Now hadde Calkas left, in this mischaunce,
Alle unwiste of this fals and wikked dede,

His doughter, which that was in grete penaunce,
For of hir lyf sche was ful sore in drede,
As she that nyste what was best to rede;
For bothe a wydew was sche, and allone
Of any frend to whom sche dorst hir mone.

XV.

Criseyde was this lady name al right;
As to my doom, in alle Troyes cité
Was non so fayre, for passynge every wight
So aungellyke was hir natif beauté,
That lyke a thynge immortal semede sche,
As doth an hevenyssh parfit creature,
That down war sent in scornyng of Nature.

XVI.

This lady, whiche al day that herd at ere
Hire faderes schame, his falsenesse, and tresoun,
Wel neygh out of hire witt for sorw and fere,
In widewes habit large of samyt broune,
On knees sche fel byforne Ector adoune,
With pitous vois and tenderly wepynge,
His mercy bad, hire seluen excusynge.

XVII.

Nowe was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saugh that sche was sorowfully bygone,
And that she was so fayre a creature,
Of his godenesse he gladded hire anone,
And sayde, 'Lat youre faderes tresoun gone
Forth with mischaunce, and *ye* your-self in joye
Dwellyt*h* with us whil yow goode list in Troye.

XVIII.

And alle the honour that men may don yow have,
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
Ye shal han, and your body shal*le* men save,
As fer as I may ought enquere or here:
And sche him thankked with ful humble chere,
And ofter wald, and it hadde ben his wille.
Sche toke hyre leve, *went* hoom, and held hir stille.

XIX.

And in hire house sche abode with swhich meyné
As til hire honour neded was to holde,
And whil sche was dwellynge in that cité,
Kepte hire astate, and bothe of yonge and olde,
Ful wel byloved, and wel men of hire tolde:
But whether that sche children hadde or non,
I rede it nogh*t*, therefore I latt it gone.

XX.

The thynges fellen, as thai don of werre,
Bitwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte,
For somday boughten thai of Troye it dere,
And eft the Grekes founden nothinge softe
The folk of Troye; and thus fortune, on lofte
And under, eft gan hem to wheielen bothe,
Aftir hire cours, ay whil thai were wrothe.

XXI.

But how this town com to destruccioun,
Ne falleth noght to purpos me to telle;
For-*why*, it were a longe *digressioun*

Fro my matere, and yow to longe to dwelle;
But the Troyanes gestes, as thei felle,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
Who-so that kan may rede hem as thai write.

XXII.

But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten,
And hire cité beseged alle aboute,
Hire old usage wolde thai noght letten,
As for to honour hire goddes ful devoute,
But aldermost in honour, out of doute,
They had a relyk heet in Palladioun,
That was hire trist aboven everichoun.

XXIII.

And so byfel, whan comen was the tyme
Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
With newe grene, of lusty Veer the prime,
And swote smellen floures, white and rede;
In sondry wises schewed, as I rede,
The folke of Troye hire observaunces olde,
Palladyones feste for to holde.

XXIV.

And to the temple, in alle hire beste wise,
In general ther wente many a wyght
To herken of Palladyoun the servise,
And namely so mony a lusti knyght,
So many a lady fresshe, and mayden bryght,
Ful wele araied, bothe most meyne and leste,
Ye bothe for the seson and the feeste.

XXV.

Among thise other folke was Criseyda,
In wydewes habit blak; but natheles,
Right as oure furste lettre is nowe an A,
In beauté firste so stoode sche makeles;
Hire goodely lokkyng gladded al the prees:
Nas nevere seyn thyng to ben preysed derre,
Nor under cloude blake so bright a sterre,

XXVI.

As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everychon,
That hire byhelden in hire blake wede;
And yet sche stood ful low and stille allone
Byhynden other folk in litel brede,
And neygh the dore, ay under schames drede,
Symple of atyre, and debonair of cheere,
Wyth ful asseured lokynge and manere.

XXVII.

This Troyllus, as he was wont to gyde
His yonge knyghtes, led hem up and down,
In thilke large temple on every syde,
Byholdynge ay the ladys of the town;
Now here now thare, for no devocioun
Hadde he to non to reven him his reste,
But gan to preyse and lakken whom him leste.

XXVIII.

And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten,
If knyght or squyer of his compaynye
Gan for to sigh, or lete his eyen bayten
On any woman that he koude aspye;

He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
And seye him thus:—'God wote sche slepeth softe
For love of the, whan thow turnest ful ofte.

XXIX.

'I have herd telle, pardieux, of your lyvynge,
Ye lovers, and youre *lewde* observaunces,
And which a labour folk han in wynnynge
Of love, and in the kepynge whiche doutaunces;
And when your preye is lost, wo and penaunces;
O, verrey fooles! nice and blynde be ye;
Ther is not oon kan war by other be.'

XXX.

And with that worde he gan cast up *his* browe,
Ascaunces, lo! is this nought wysely spoken?
At whiche the God of Love gan loken rowe
Right for despit, and shope for to ben wroken.
He kydde onon his bow nas not broken;
For, sodenly he hitte him atte fulle,
And *yet* as proude a pakoe can he pulle.

XXXI.

O blynde world! O blynd intencioun!
How often falleth alle the effecte contrarie
Of surquidrye and foule presumpcioun,
For kaught is pryde, and kaught is debonaire!
This Troylus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he schall descenden;
But alday fayleth thinge that fooles wenden.

XXXII.

As proude Bayard gynneth for to skyppe
Out of the wey, so priketh him his corne,
Til he a lassch have of the longe whippe,
Than thynketh he, 'Thogh I praunce al byforne
First in the trayse, ful fat and newe shorne,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I mote endure, and with my feeres drawe.'

XXXIII.

So ferd it by this fiers and proude knyght,
Though he a worthi kynges sonne were,
And wende no thinge had had swiche myght,
Ayenis his wille, that schold his herte stiere;
That with a look his *herte* wax a feere,
That, he that now was moost in pride above,
Wax sodeynly most subgit unto love.

XXXIV.

Forthi ensaumple taketh of this man,
Ye wise, proude, and worthi folkes alle,
To scornen Love, whiche that so soone kan
The fredom of youre hertes to him thralle;
For evere was, and evere schal befalle,
That Love is he that alle thinge may bynde;
For may no man fordon the lawe of kynde.

XXXV.

That this be sothe hath proved and doth yett;
For this trowe I ye knowen alle *and* some,
Men reden *not* that folk han gretter witte

Than thei that hath ben most with love ynome;
And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and the grettest of degree;
This was and is, and yett men schal it see.

XXXVI.

And treweliche it sitt wele to be so,
For alderwysest han tharwith ben plesed,
And thai that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han ben conforted most and esed;
And oft it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthi folk made worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vice and schame.

XXXVII.

And sith it may not godely ben withstonde,
And is a thinge so vertuous in kynde,
Refuseth not to Love for to ben bonde,
Syn, as him selven liste, he may yow bynde,
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and wynde
Than that that brest; and therfor I yow rede
To folowen him that so wele kan yow lede.

XXXVIII.

But for to tellen forthe in speciale,
As of this kynges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thinge collateral,
Of hym thenke I my tale for to holde,
Bothe of his joie, and of his cares colde,
And alle his werk, as towchynge this matere,
For I it gan, I wil therto refeere.

XXXIX.

Withinne the temple he wente him forth pleyinge,
This Troylus, of every wyght aboute,
On this lady, and now on that lokynge,
Whereso sche were of towne, or of withoute:
And upon cas bifel, that, thorwgh a route,
His eyghe percede, and so it depe wente,
Til on Cryseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.

XL.

And sodeynly he wex ther with astoned,
And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty wise:
'O mercye God!' thoughte he, 'where hastow woned,
That ert so fair and goodely to devyse?'
Ther-with his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
And softe syghede, lest men myght hym here,
And caughte ayeyn his firste playinge chere.

XLI.

Sche nas not with the leste of hire stature,
But alle hire lymes so wele answerynge
Weren to womanhode, that creature
Nas never lesse mannyssh in semynge.
And ek the pure wyse of hire mevynge
Schewede wele, that men myght in hire gesse
Honor, estate, and womanly noblesse.

XLII.

Tho Troylus, right wonder wele withalle,
Gan for to like hire mevynge and hire chere,
Whiche somdele deignous was, for sche lete falle

Hire loke a lite aside, in swiche manere
Ascaunces, 'What! may I nat stonden here?'
And after that hire lokynge gan sche lyghte,
That never thoughte hym seen so goode a sighte.

XLIII.

And of hire loke in him ther gan to quyken
So grete desire, and swhiche affeccioun,
That in his hertes botme gan to stiken,
Of hire his fixe and depe impressioun:
And though he arst hadde poured up and doun,
He was tho gladde his hornes in to shrynke,
Unnethes wiste he how to loke or wynke.

XLIV.

Loo! he that lete hymselven so konnynge,
And scorned hym that loves peynes dryen,
Was ful unwar that Love hadde his dwellynge
Withinne the subtile stremes of hir eyen;
That sodeynly hym thoughte he felte deyen,
Ryght with hire loke, the spirit in his herte;
Blissed be Love, that thus kan folk converte!

XLV.

Sche, this in blake, likynge to Troylus,
Over alle thinge he stode for to beholde;
Ne his desire, ne wherfor he stode thus,
He neyther chere made, ne worde tolde;
But fram afer, his manere for to holde,
On other thinge his loke somtyme he caste,
And oft on hire, while that the servise laste:

XLVI.

And after this, nat fulliche alle awhaped,
Out of the temple alle esiliche he wente,
Repentynge him that he hadde ever i-japed
Of Loves folke, lest fully the descente
Of scorne fille on hymself; but what he mente,
Lest it were wiste on any maner syde,
His wo he gan dissimilen and hyde.

XLVII.

When he was fro the temple thus departed,
He streght anon unto his paleys torneth,
Right with hire loke thorwgh schoten and thorwgh darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he sojorneth,
And al his chere and speche also he borneth,
And ay of Loves servantes every while,
Him-self to wre, at hem he gan to smile,

XLVIII.

And seyde, 'A, Lorde! so ye lyve al in leste,
Ye lovers, for the konnyngest of yow,
That serveth most ententifliche and best,
Hym tit als often harme therof as prowe;
Your hire is quyt ayeyn, ye, God wote howe!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for gode servise;
In feithe yowr ordre is ruled in gode wyse.

XLIX.

'In non certeyn ben alle youre observaunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be,
Ne no thinge asketh so grete attendaunces,

As doth your lay, and that know alle ye:
But that is not the werste, as mote I the,
But tolde I yow the werste poynt I leeve,
Al seyde I soth, ye wolden at me greve.

L.

'But take this, that ye loveres oft eschewe,
Or elles don of goode intencioun,
Ful oft thi lady wol it misconstrewe,
And deme it harme in hyr opinioun;
And yit if sche, for other encheson,
Be wroth, than schalt thow have a groyn onon:
Lord! wele is hym that may be of yow one!'

LI.

But for al this, when *that* he sey his tyme,
He held his pees, non other boote him gaynede
For Love bigan his fetheres so to lyme,
That wel unnethe until his folk he fayned*e*,
That other besye nedes him destraynede;
For wo was him, that what to don he nyste,
But bad his folk to gon wher that hem liste.

LII.

And when that he in chaumber was allon,
He down upon his beddes feet him sette,
And first he gan to syke, and eft to grone,
And thoughte ay on hire so, withouten lette,
That as he satt and woke, his spirit mette
That he hire saugh, and temple, and al the wyse
Right of hire loke, and gan it new avise.

LIII.

Thus gan he make a mirour of his mynde,
In whiche he saugh alle holly hire figure,
And that he wel kouth in his herte fynde,
It was to him ryght a goode aventure
To love swhich oon, and if he dydde his cure
To serven hire, yet myght he falle in grace,
Or elles, for oon of hir servauntes pace.

LIV.

Ymaginynge that travaille nor grame
Ne myghte for so goodely one be lorne
As she; ne him for his desire ne shame,
Al were it wiste, but in pris and upborne
Of alle lovers, wele more than byforne;
Thus argumentede he, in hiis gynnynge,
Ful unavised of his wo comynge.

LV.

Thus toke he purpos Loves craft to suwe,
And thought he wolde wyrkyn prively,
First to hiden his desire *al* in muwe
From every wyght yborne, alle outrely,
But he myght aught recovered be therby;
Rememberynge him, that love to wyde yblowe
Yelt bitter fruyt, thoughe swete sede be sawe.

LVI.

And over al this yet muchel more he thoughte
What for to speke, and what to holden inne,
And what *to* arten; hire to love he soughte,

And on a songe anon ryght to bigynne,
And gan loude on his sorwe for to wynne.
For with goode hope he gan fully assente
Cryseyde for to love, and nought repente.

LVII.

And of his songe nought only the sentence,
As write myn autour called Lollius,
But pleynly save oure tonges difference,
I dar wel seyn, in alle that Troylus
Seyde in his songe, loo, every word right thus
As I shal seyn; and who-so liste it here,
Lo, next this vers, he may it fynde there.

CANTUS TROILI.

LVIII.

'If no love is, O God, what fele I so?
And if love is, what thinge and whiche is he?
If love be gode, from whennes comth my wo?
If it be wykke, a wonder thynketh me,
Whenne every tornment and adversité,
That cometh of him, may to me savory thynke.
For ay thirst I the more that iche it drynke.

LIX.

'And if that at myn owne lust I brenne,
From whennes cometh my wailynge and my pleynte?
If harme agree me, whereto pleyne I thenne?
I noot ne why unwery that I feynte.
O quyke deth! O swete harme so queynte!
How may *I se* in me swhiche quantité!
But if that I consente that it *so* be?

LX.

'And if that I consente, I wrongefully
Compleyne iwis: thus possed to and fro,
Al stierlees withinne a boot am I
Amyd the see, betwexen windes two,
That in contrarie standen ever mo.
Allas, what is this wonder maladye?
For hete of cold, for cold of hete I dye.'

LXI.

And to the god of love thus seyde he
With pitous vois, 'O Lord, now youres is
Mi spirit, whiche *ay* aughte youres be;
Yow thanke I, Lord, that have me brought to this;
But whether goddesse or womman iwys
Sche be I not, which that ye do me serve;
But as hire man I wol ay lyve and sterve.

LXII.

'Ye stonden in hire eyen mightyly,
As in a place unto your vertu digne:
Wherfor, Lord, if my servise or I
May liken yow, so beth to me benigne;
For myn estate roial here I resigne
Into hire hond, and with ful humble chere
Bycome hire man, as to my lady dere.'

LXIII.

In hym ne deynede sparen blode roial
The fir of love, ye, wherfro God me blisse,
Ne him forbar in no degré, for al

His vertue, or his excellent prowesse;
But held hym as his thralle low in destresse,
And brinde hym so in sondry wyse ay newe,
That sexty tyme a day he lost his hewe.

LXIV.

So muchel day by day his owne thought,
For lust to hire, began quiken and encresse,
That every other charge he sett at nought,
Forthi ful oft, his hote fir to cesse,
To sene hire goodely loke he gan to preesse;
For tharby to ben esed wele he wende,
And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.

LXV.

For ay the ner the fir the hatter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye:
But were he fer or nere, I dar seye this,
By nyght or day, for wisdom or for folye,
His herte, which that is his brestes eye,
Was *ay* on hire, that fairer was to sene
Than evere were Eleyne, or Polixene.

LXVI.

Ek of the day ther passed*e* nought an houre,
That to himself a thowsand tyme he seyde,
'Gode godely, to whom serve I *and* laboure
As I best kan, now wold*e* God, Cryseyde,
Ye wolden on me rew er that I dyede,
My deere herte, allas, myn hele and hewe,
And lif is lost, but ye wol on me rewe.'

LXVII.

Alle other dredes weryn from hym fledde,
Bothe of thassege, and his savacioun;
Ne in his desire none other *fantasye* bredde,
But argumentes to this conclusioun,
That sche of him wolde han compassion,
And he to ben hire man whil he may dure,
Lo, here his lif, and from the deth his cure.

LXVIII.

The scharppe showres fille of armes preve,
That Ector or his othere bretheren diden,
Ne made hym oonly therefor ones meve,
And *yet* was he, wher-so men went or riden,
Founde oon the best, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide eke swiche travaile
In armes, that to thynke it was mervaille.

LXIX.

But for none hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the town,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde,
But oonly, lo, for this conclusioun,
To liken hire the bette for his renoun:
Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
That the Grekes *al* as the deth him dredde.

LXX.

And fro this forth tho reft him love his slepe
And made his mete his foo; and ek his sorwe
Gan multiplye, that who-so toke kepe,

It shewed in his hewe bothe eve and morwe;
Therfore a title he gan him for to borwe
Of other sikenesse, lest men of him wende
That the hote fire of love him brende;

LXXI.

And seyd he hadde a fevyr, and ferde amys;
But howe it was certein kan I not seye,
If that his lady understode nat this,
Or feyned hir she nyste, on of the tweye:
But wele I rede, that by no maner weye
Ne semed it *as* that she of him roughte,
Or of his peyne, or what so evere he thoughte.

LXXII.

But than felte this Troylus swiche wo
That he was wel nyghe wode, for ay his drede
Was this, that sche som wyght hadde loved so,
That never of him she wold have taken hede;
For whiche him thought he felt his herte blede,
Ne of his wo ne dorst he nat bygynne
To tellen hire, for al this world to wynne.

LXXIII.

But when he hadde a space from his care,
Thus to himself ful oft he gan to pleyne:
He sayde 'O fole, now artow in the snare,
That whilom japedest at loves peyne
Now artow hent, now gnawe thin owne cheyne,
Thow were ay wont eche lovere reprehende
Of thing fro which thow kanst the nat defende.

LXXIV.

'What wol now everyche lover seyn of the,
If this be wiste? But evere in thin absence
Laughen in scorne, and seyn, Loo, ther gothe he
That is *the* man of so grete sapience,
And held us lovers leest in reverence;
Now thanketh God, he may gone in the daunce
Of him that Love liste fiebly for tavaunce.

LXXV.

'But O! thow woful Troilus, God wolde,
Seth thow most loven, thorwgh thi desteyné,
That thow bysette were on swich on that sholde
Know al thi wo, al lakked hire pité:
But also colde in love towardes the
Thi lady is as froost in wynter mone,
And thow fordoon as snowe in fire is soone.

LXXVI.

'God wold I were aryved in the porte
Of deth, to which my sorow wol me lede:
A lord! to me it were a grete comforte,
Than were I qwytte of langwysshynge in drede;
For be myn hidde sorowe yblowe on brede,
I shal byjaped ben a thowsand tyme
More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.

LXXVII.

'But now help God, and ye, swete, for whom
I pleyne, icaught ye never wyght so faste;
O mercy, dere hert, and help me from

The deth, for I, whil that my lif may laste,
More than my-self wol love yow to my laste,
And with some freendly loke gladdeth me, swete,
Thowgh nevere more thynge ye me byhete.'

LXXVIII.

This wordes and ful many another to
He spak, and called evere in his compleynte
Hire name for to tellen hire his wo,
Tyl neigh that he in salte teris dreynte;
Al was for noght, she herde not his pleynte;
And when that he bithought on that folye,
A thousand folde his wo gan to multiplye.

LXXIX.

Biwayllynge in his chaumber thus allone,
A frende of his that called was Pandare,
Come ones unwar, and herde hym grone,
And saye his freende in swich destresse and care;
'Allas,' quod he, 'who causeth al this fare?
O mercy God, what unhap may this mene?
Han now thus soone Grekes made yow leene?

LXXX.

'Or hastow som remors of conscience?
And art now falle in some devocioun,
And waylest for thi synne and thin offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?
God save hem that biseged han oure town,
And so kan leye oure jolyté on presse,
And brynge oure lusti folk to holynesse!"

LXXXI.

Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
That with swiche thinge he myght him angry maken,
And with an angre don his wo to falle,
As for the tyme, and his courage awaken;
But wele he wyste, as fer as tonges spaken,
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

LXXXII.

'What cas,' quod Troylus, 'or what aventure
Hath gided the to sen me languysshinge,
That am refus of every creature?
But for the love of God, at my prayinge
Go henne away, for certys my deyinge
Wol the disese, and I mote nedes deye;
Therfor go wey, ther is no more to seye.

LXXXIII.

'But if thow wene I be thus sik for drede,
It is not so, and therefore scorne nought;
Ther is an other thynge I take of hede,
Wel more than aught the Grekes han ywroght,
Whiche cause is of my dethe for sorw and thought;
But though that I now telle it the ne leste
Be thow nought wroth, I hidde it for the beste.'

LXXXIV.

This Pandare, that neyghe malte for wo and routhe,
Ful often seyd, 'Allas, what may this be?
'Now frende,' quod he, 'if evere love or trouthe

Hath ben or is bytwixen the and me,
Ne do thow nevere swiche a cruelté,
To hyden fro thi frende so grete a care;
Wostow not wele that it am I, Pandare?

LXXXV.

'I wil parten with the al thi peyne,
If it be so I do the comfort,
As it is frendes right, soth for to seyne,
To entreparten wo, as gladde desport;
I have and schal, for trew or fals report,
In wronge and right ilovede the al my lyve;
Hide nat thy woo fro me, but telle it bilyve.'

LXXXVI.

Than gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
And seyde him thus, 'God leve it be my best
To telle it the, *for*syth it may the like,
Yet wil I telle it though myn herte breste,
And wele wote I thow mayst do me no reste;
But leste thow deme I tryste not to the,
Now herke frende, for thus it stont with me.

LXXXVII.

'Love, ayeins the which who-so defendeth
Him-selven most him alderlest availleth,
With dessespeir so sorwfully me offendeth
That streght unto the deth myn herte sailleth;
Therto desire so brennyngly me assaileth,
That to ben slayn, it were a gretter joye
To me, than kyng of Grece be and Troye.

LXXXVIII.

'Suffiseth this, my fulle frend Pandare,
That I have seyde, for now wostow my wo;
And, for the love of God, my colde care
So hide it wele, I tolde it nevere to mo;
For harmes myghte folwen mo than two
If it were wiste, but be thow in gladnesse,
And lat me sterve, unknow, of my destresse.'

LXXXIX.

'How hast thow thus unkyndely and longe
Hidde this fro me, thow fool?' quod Pandarus;
'Paraunter thow myght after swiche oon longe,
That myn avys anon may helpen us.'
'This were a wonder thinge,' quod Troilus,
Thow coudest nevere in love thi-selven wysse,
How devel maystow brynge me to blysse.'

XC.

'Ye, Troilus, herke now,' quod Pandare,
Though I be nyse; it happeth often so,
That oon that excesse doth ful yvele fare,
By goode conseyl kan kepe his frende ther fro:
I have my-self ek seyen a blynde man go
Ther as he fel that coude loken wyde;
A fool may ek a wise man ofte gyde.

XCI.

'A wheston is no kervynge instrument,
But yet it maketh sharpe kervynge tolis,
And ther thow wost I have aught myswent,

Eschewe thow that, for swich thinge to the scole is.
Thus *oughte* wise men ben ware of folis;
If thow do so thi witte is wele bywared;
By *his* contrarye is every thinge declared.

XCII.

'For how myght evere swetenesse han ben knowe
To hym that nevere tastede bitternesse?
Ne no man may ben inly glad, I trowe;
That nevere was in sorwe or som destresse:
Ek whit by blak, ek schame by worthynes,
Ech sett by other, more for other semeth,
As men may se; and so the wise it demeth.

XCIII.

'Sith thus of two contraries is a loore,
I, that have in love so oft asayed
Grevaunces, ought konne and wele the more
Conseyllen the of that thow ert amayed;
Ek the ne aughte not ben yvel apayed,
Thoughe I desire with the for to bere
Thin hevy charge, it schal the lesse dere.

XCIV.

'I wote wele that it fareth thus by me,
As to thi brother Paris, an hierdesse,
Whiche that ycleped was Oonené,
Wroot in a compleynt of hire hevynesse:
Ye seye the lettre that sche wroot I gesse?'
'Nay nevere yet iwis, quod Troilus.
'Now,' quod Pandare, 'herken, it was thus:—

XCV.

'Phoebus, that first fond art of medicine,'
Quod she, 'and coude in every wyghtes care
Remede and rede, by herbes he kneow fyne,
Yet to hymself his konnynge was ful bare,
For love had hym so bounden in a snare,
Al for the doughter of the kynge Admete,
That al his craft ne koude his sorwes beete.'

XCVI.

'Right so fare I, unhappily for me!
I love oone beste, and that me smerteth soore;
And yet paraunter kan I reden the
And nat myselfe; repreve me no more,
I have no cause, I wote wele, for to sore,
As doth an hauk that listeth for to pleye,
But to thi help yet somwhat kan I seye.

XCVII.

'And of o thynge ryght siker maystow be,
That certein for to dyen in the peyne,
That I shal never mo discoveren the;
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat restreyne
The fro thy love, theigh that it were Eleyne,
That is thi brother wyf, if ich it wiste;
Be what she be, and love hyre as the liste.

XCVIII.

'Therfor as frend fulliche in me asseure,
And tel me platte what is thenchoeson
And final cause of wo that ye endure;

For, douteth nothinge, myn intencion
Nys nat to yow of reprehencion
To speke as now, for nothinge may bireve
A man to love, til that hym list to *leve*.

XCIX.

'And wyteth wele, that both two ben vices,
Mystrusten alle, or ellis alle leve;
But wele I wote, the mene of it no vice is;
For for to trusten som wyght is a preve
Of trouthe, and forthi wold I fayne remeve
Thi wronge conceyte, and do the som wyght truste
Thi wo to telle: and tel me if the liste,

C.

'The wise seith, Wo hym that is allone,
For, and he falle, he hath non helpe him to ryse;
And sith thow hast a felow, tel thi moone,
For this nis naught, certeyne, the nexte wise
To wynnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walow and wepe, as Nyobe the quene,
Whos teerys yet in marble ben yseene.

CI.

'Lat be thi wepynge and thy drerynesse,
And lat us lissen wo with other speeche,
So may thi woful tyme seme lesse;
Delite not in wo, thi wo to seche,
As doon this fooles that hire sorw eche
With sorowe, when thei han mysaventure,
And listen nought to seche hem oother cure.

CII.

'Men seyn, to wrecche is consolacion
To have another félaw in his peyne:
That oughte wele ben oure opynyon,
For bothen thow and I of love we pleyne;
So ful of sorw am I, soth for to seyn,
That certanly no more harde grace
May sitte on me, for-why there is no space.

CIII.

'If God wil thow art nought agast of me,
Lest I wol of thi lady the begile:
Thow woste thi-self whom that I love, pardé,
As I best kan, gon sithen longe while;
And sith thow wost I do it for no wile,
And sith I am he that thow tristest moost,
Tel me somwhat syn that my wo thow woste.'

CIV.

Yet Troilus for al this *no* worde sayde,
But longe he lay as stille as he dede were;
And after this with sikynge he abreyde,
And to Pandarus voice he lente his ere,
And up his eighen cast he, that in feere
Was Pandarus leste that in frenesye,
He sholde falle or ellis sone dye,

CV.

And criede, 'Awake,' ful wondurliche and scharpe;
'What? slombrestow as in *a* litargye?
Or artow like an asse to the harpe,

That hereth sown, whan men the strenges plye,
But in hys mynde of that no melodye
May synken hym to gladden, for that he
So dul is of his bestialitee?'

CVI.

And with that Pandare of his wordes stente,
But Troilus yet hym nothynge answerde,
For-why to tellen nas not his entente
To nevere no man, for whom that he so ferde;
For it is seyde men maketh oft a yerd
With which the maker is hymself ybeten
In sondry manere, as thise wyse treten.

CVII.

And, nameliche, in his counseylle tellynge
That towcheth love that oughte ben secree;
For of hymself it wol *ne* nought out sprynge,
But-if that it the bette governed be.
Ek som tyme it is a craft to seme fle,
Fro thynge which in effect men hunte faste:
Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.

CVIII.

But nathelees, when he hadde herde him crye
'Awak!' he gan to syken wonder sore,
And seyde, 'Frende, thoughe that I still*e* lye,
I am not deef, now pees and crye namore,
For I have herde thi wordes and thi loore;
But suffre me my myschief to bywaylle,
For thi proverbes may me nought avaylle.

CIX.

'Nor other cure kanstow none for me,
Eke I nyl not ben cured, I wol dye:
What know I of the quene Nyobé?
Lat be thin olde ensaumples, I the preye.'
'No,' quod tho Pandarus, 'therfore I seye,
Swiche is delit of fooles to bewepe
Hyre wo, but seken boote thei ne kepe.

CX.

'Now knowe I that reson in the faileth:
But tel me, if I wyste what she were
For whom that the al this misaventure ailleth,
Dorstestow that I tolde in hyre ere
Thy wo, syth thow darst nought thi-self for feere,
And hyre bysought on the to han som routhe?'
'Whi, nay,' quod he, 'by God and by my trouthe'

CXI.

'What? nat as bisily,' quod Pandarus,
'As though myn owen lyfe lay on this nede?'
'No certes brother,' quod this Troilus;
'And whi?'—For that thow sholdest nevere spede.'
'Wostow that wele?'—'Ye, that is out of drede,'
Quod Troilus, 'for al that evere ye konne,
She nyl to noon swhich wreche as I ben wonne.'

CXII.

Quod Pandarus, 'Allas what may this be,
That thow despaired art thus causelees?
What? lyveth nat thi lady, benedicite!

How wostow so that thow art graceles?
Swhiche yvel is nat alwey bootelees:
Why, put nat impossible thus thi cure,
Syth thinge to come is oft in aventure.

CXIII.

'I graunte wele that thow endurest wo
As sharpe as doth *he* Sycip*h*us in Helle,
Whos stomak fowles tyren everemo,
That hyghten volturis as bokes telle;
But I may not endure that thow dwelle
In so unskilful an opynyon,
That of thi wo is no curacion.

CXIV.

'But oones nyltow, for thi coward herte,
And for thin ire, and foolysh wilfulnesse,
For wantruste tellen of thi sorwes smerte,
Ne to thin owne help don besynesse,
As muche as speke a reson more or lesse,
But liste as he that list of nothynge recche;
What woman koude love swiche a wreche?

CXV.

'What may she demen oother of thi deeth,
If thow thus deye and she noot whi it is,
But that for feere is yolden up thy brethe,
For Grekis han biseged us, iwys?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han for this!
Thus wol she seyn and alle the town atonees,
'The wreche is deed, the devel have his bones.'

CXVI.

'Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye, and knele;
But love a woman that she wote it nought,
And she wol qwyte that thow shalt not feele:
Unknowe unkyst, and lost that is unsought.
What! many a man *hath* love ful deere abought,
Twenty wynter *er* that his lady wyste,
That never yyt his lady mouth he kyste.

CXVII.

'What? scholde he therfor fallen in dispayr?
Or be recreaunte of his owne tene,
Or sleen hymself, al be his lady faire?
Nay, nay, but evere in oone be fresch and grene,
To serve and love his deere hertes queene,
And thynke it is a guerdon hire to serve
A thowsand folde moore than he kan deserve.'

CXVIII.

And of that worde took hede Troylus,
And thought onone, what folye he was inne,
And how that sothe hym seyde Pandarus,
That for to slen hymself myghte he nat wynne,
But bothe doon unmanhode and a synne,
And of his deth his lady nought to wyte;
For of his wo, God wote she knewe ful lyte.

CXIX.

And with that thought he gan ful soore syke,
And seyd, 'Allas, what is me beste to do?'
To whom Pandare answered, 'If the lyke,

The beste is that thow telle me al thi wo:
And have my trouthe, but thow it fynde so
I be thi boote, or that it be ful longe,
To pieces do me draw, and sythen honge.'

CXX.

'Ye, so thow seyst,' quod Troylus tho, 'allas,
But, God woote, it *is* nought the rather so:
Ful harde it were to help*en* in this cas,
For wele fynde I that Fortune is my *fo:*
Ne alle the men that ryden konne or go
May of hyre cruel whiel the harme withstonde,
For, as hire luste, she pleyeth with fre and bonde.'

CXXI.

Quod Pandarus, 'Than blamestow Fortune
For thow art wrothe, ye, now at arst I se:
Wostow nat wel that Fortune is comune
To every maner wyght, in some degré?
And yet thow hast this comfort, lo pardé,
That as hire joyes moten overgone,
So mote hire sorwes passen everychone.

CXXII.

'For if hire whiel stynte any thinge to torne,
Thanne cessed she Fortune anon to be:
Now sith hire whiel by no way may sojorne,
What wostow if hire mutabilité,
Ryght as thi-selven list, wol don by the?
Or that she be nought fer fro thin helpynge?
Paraunter thow hast cause for to synge.

CXXIII.

'And therfor wostow what I the beseche?
Lat be thi wo and tornynge to the grounde;
For who-so liste have helynge of his leche,
To hym behoveth first unwre his wounde:
To Cerberus in Helle ay be I bounde,
Were it for my sustir al thi sorwe,
By my wille she sholde al be thin to morwe.

CXXIV.

'Loke up, I seye, and telle me what she is
Anon, that I may gone aboute thi nede:
Know iche hire ought? for my love telle me this;
Thanne wolde I hopen the rather for to spede.'
Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,
For he was hit, and wex alle rede for schame;
'Aha!' quod Pandare, 'here bygynneth game.'

CXXV.

And with that worde he gan hym for to schake,
And seyde, 'Theef, thow shalt hir name telle!'
But tho gan sely Troylus for to quake,
As though men sholde han led hym into Helle.
And seyde, 'Allas, of al my wo the welle,
Thanne is my swote foo called Cryseyde;'
And wel neygh with that worde for feere he deyede.

CXXVI.

And whan that Pandare herde hyre name nevene,
Lord! he was glad, and seyde, 'Frende so dere,
Now fare aright, for Jouves name in Hevene,

Love hath byset the welle, be of goode chere!
For of good name, and wisdom, and manere
She hath ynough, and eke of gentilesse:
If she be fayre, thow wost thi-self, I gesse.

CXXVII.

'Ne nevere saugh I a moore bountevous
Of hyre estate, ne gladder nor of speche
A frendlyer, ne a moore graciouse
For to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to don; and al this bet to eche
In honor to as fer as she may strecche,
A kynges herte semeth by hires a wreche.

CXXVIII.

'And forthi loke of good comfort thow be;
For certeinly the ferste poynt is this,
Of noble corage, and wele ordeyne
A man to have pees with hymself, ywis:
So oghtist thow, for nought but good it is
To love wele, and in a worthy place;
To ogh not to clepe hit hap, but grace.]

CXXIX.

'And also thynk, and therwith gladde the,
That syth thi lady vertuouse is alle,
So folweth it that ther is som pyté
Amange alle this other in general;
And forthi se that thow in speciale
Requere nought that is ayanys hir name,
For vertue streccheth naught hymself to shame.

CXXX.

'But wele is me that ever I was borne,
That thow bisett art in so goode a place;
For, by my trouth, in love I dorst have sworne,
The sholde nevere han tyd *so* fayre a grace;
And wostow *why?* for thow were wonte to chace
At Love in scorne, and for despite him calle
Seint Ydiot, Lorde of thise fooles alle.

CXXXI.

'How often hastow made thi nyce japes,
And seyde, that Loves servauntz everichon
Of nyceté ben verrey goddes apes;
And some wolde munche hire mete allone,
Lyggynge a bedde, and make hem for to grone;
And some thow seydest hadde a blaunche fevere,
And preydest God he sholde never kevere.

CXXXII.

'And som of hem took on hem for the colde,
More than inough, so seydestow ful ofte;
And some han feyned ofte tyme and tolde
How that thei waken, whan they slepten softe,
And thus thei wolde han brought hemself alofte,
And nathelees were under atte laste;
Thus seydestow, and japed*est* ful faste.

CXXXIII.

'Yet seydestow, that for the moore part
Thyse lovers wolden speke in general,
And thoughten that *it* was a syker art,

For faylinge, for tassayen over alle:
Now may *I* jape of the, if that I shalle;
But natheles, though that I sholde deye,
That thow art noon of tho, I dorst *wel* seye.

CXXXIV.

'Now beet thy breest, and sey to god of love,
'Thi grace, lord! for now I me repente
If I misspake, for now my-self I love:'
Thus seye with al thin herte, in goode entente.'
Quod Troylus, 'A! lorde, I me consente,
And preye to the my japes *thou* foryive,
And I schal nevermore whil that I lyve.'

CXXXV.

'Thow seyst wele,' quod Pandare, 'and now I hope
That thow the goddes wrathe hast al apesed;
And sithen thow hast wepen many a drope,
And seyd swiche thinge where with thi god is plesed,
Now wolde nevere God but thow were esed:
And thynke wele she of whom rist al thi wo,
Hereafter may thi comfort ben also.

CXXXVI.

'For thilke grounde that bereth the wedes wykke
Bereth eke thise holsom herbes, as ful ofte,
Nexte the foule netle, rough and thikke,
The rose waxeth, swote, and smothe, and softe;
And next the valay is the hille olofte,
And nexte the derke nyght the glade morwe,
And also joye is next the fyn of sorwe.

CXXXVII.

'Now looke that atempree be thi brydel,
And for the beste ay suffre to the tyde,
Or elles alle oure labour is on ydel;
He hasteth wele, that wysly kan abyde;
Be diligent and trewe, and ay wele hyde,
Be lusti, fre, persevere in thi servise,
And al is wele if thow wyrke in this wise.

CXXXVIII.

'But he that departed is in every place
Is no wher hool, as writen clerkes wyse;
What wonder is, though swiche an have no grace?
Ek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
As plaunte a tree or erb, in sondry wise,
And on the morwe pulle it up as bylyve,
No wonder is, though it may nevere thryve.

CXXXIX.

'And sith that god of love hath the bystowede
In place digne unto thi worthynesse,
Stonde faste, for to goode port hastow rowede,
And of thiself, for any hevynesse,
Hope alwey wele; for, but-if drerinesse
Or over-haste our bothe laboure schende,
I hope of this to maken a ful gode ende.

CXL.

'And wostow why I am the lesse afered,
Of this mater with my nece *to* trete?
For this have I herde seyde of *olde* lered,

Was never man or woman *yet* bigete,
That was unapt to so*f*eren loves hete
Celestial, or elles love of kynde;
Forthi, som grace I hope in hyre to fynde.

CXLI.

'And for to speke of hyre in special,
Hyre beauté to bethynken, and hyre youthe,
It sitt hyre nought to ben celestial
As yet, though that hir lyste bothe and kouthe:
But, trewly, it sit*e* hire wel ryght nou*the*
A worthy knyght to loven and cherice,
And but she do, I holde it for a vice.

CXLII.

'Wharfor I am, and wol ben, ay redy
To peynen me to do yow this servyse;
For bothe yow to pleese, this hope I
Herefterwarde; for ye ben bothe wyse,
And konne conseyle kepe in swiche a wyse,
That no man schal the wyser of it be,
And so we may*e* ben gladded alle thre.

CXLIII.

'And by my trouthe I have right now of the
A good conceyte in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is I wol now that thow se;
I thenke that, sith Love of his godenesse
Hath *the* converted oute of wikkydnesse,
That thow shalt ben the beste post, I leeve,
Of alle his lay, and moost his foes to greve.

CXLIV.

'Ensaumple whi se now:—thise wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost ayayn *al* lawe,
And ben converted from hire wikked werkes
Thorwgh grace of God, that list hem to him drawe,
Than are thei folk that han moost God in awe,
And strenghest feythed ben, I understonde,
And konne an erroure alderbeste withstonde.'

CXLV.

When Troylus had herd Pandare assented
To ben his help in lovynge of Creseyde,
Weex of his wo, as who seyth, untormented,
But hotter wex his love; and thus he seyde
With sobre chere, al-though his herte pleyde:—
'Now, blisful Venus, helpe ar that I sterve,
Of the, Pandare, I mowe som thanke deserve.

CXLVI.

'But, dere frend, how shal my wo be lesse,
Til this be don? and goode ek telle me this,
How woltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Leste she be wroth, this drede I moost iwis,
Or nyl not here or trowen howe it is;
Al this drede I, and eke for the manere
Of the, hyre em, she nyl no swich thinge here.'

CXLVII.

Quod Pandarus, 'Thow hast a ful grete care,
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the moone:
Why, lord! I hate of the thi nice fare!

Why entremette of that thou hast to doone?
For Goodes love, I bydde the a boone,
So let malon, and it shal be thi best;'
'Why frend,' quod he, 'now do right as the leste.

CXLVIII.

'But herke, Pandare, o worde, for I nolde
That thow in me wendest so grete foly,
That to my lady I desyren scholde
That towcheth harme, or any vilanye;
For, dredeles, me ware levere deye,
Than she of me aught ellis understode,
But that that myghte sownen into goode.'

CXLIX.

Tho lough this Pandare, and anon answerde,
'And I thi borugh! fy! no wyght dothe but so;
I roughte naught though that she stode and herde
How that thow seyste; but farewel, I wol go;
Adieu, be glad, God *spede* us bothe two!
Yif me this labour and this bysynesse,
And of my speede be thin alle that swettenesse.'

CL.

Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
And seyde, 'Now fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, pardee, God schal help us at the laste,
And dredelees, if that my lif may laste,
And God toforne, lo som of hem shal smerte;
And yet mathynketh that this avaunt may sterte.

CLI.

'Now, Pandare, I ne kan no more seye,
But thow wyse, thow wost, thow mayst, thow art alle:
My lyf, my deth, hool in thin honde I leye,'
'Helpe now,' quod he. 'Yis, by my trouthe, I shal.'
'God yelde the frend, and this in special,'
Quod Troilus, 'that thow me recomaunde
To hire that to the deeth may me comaunde.'

CLII.

This Pandarus tho, desyrous to serve
His ful*le* frend, than seyd in this manere,—
'Farwele, and thenk I wole thi thank deserve.
Have here my trouthe, and that thow shalt wele here;'
And went his wey, thenkynge on this matere,
And how he best myghte hire beseche grace,
And fynde a tyme therto and a place.

CLIII.

For every wight that hath an house to founde,
Ne renneth naught the werk for to bygynne
With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
And sende his hertes lyne out fro withinne,
Alderfirst his purpos for to wynne:
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste his werk ful wysly ar he wroughte.

CLIV.

But Troylus lay tho no lenger doun,
But up anone upon his steede bay,
And in the feelde he pleyde the leoune,

Wo was that Grek, that with hym mette *that* day!
And in the town, his maner tho forth ay
So goodely was, and gat hym so in grace,
That ech hym lovede that loked on his face.

CLV.

For he bycome the frendlyeste wyght,
The gentylest, and ek the mooste fre,
The thriftiest, and one the beste knyght
That in his tyme was, or myghte be:
Dede ware his japes and his crueltee,
His hieghe porte and his manere estraunge,
And ech of hem gan for a vertu chaunge.

CLVI.

Now lat us stynte of Troylus a stounde,
That fareth lyk a man that hurte is soore,
And is somedeel of akynge of his wounde
Ylissed wel, but heeled no deel more:
And, as an esy pacient, the loore
Abit of hym that gothe aboute his cure,
And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

EXPLICIT LIBER PRIMUS.

PROHEMIUM SECUNDI LIBRI.

I.

UT of thise blake wawes for to saylle,
O wynde, O wynde, the weder gynneth to clere;
For in this see the boot hath swiche travaylle
Of my connynge, that unnethe I it stere:
This see clepe I the tempestous matere
Of desespeyre, that Troylus was inne;
But now of hope the kalendes bigynne.

II.

O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
Thow be my spede fro this forth and my muse
To ryme wel, this book tyl I have do;
Me nedeth here noon oother art to use;
For-why to every lover I me excuse,
That of no sentement I this endyte,
But out of Latyn in my tonge it write.

III.

Wherfor I nyl have neyther thanke ne blame
Of al this werk, but preye yow mekely,
Desblameth me, if any worde be lame,
For as myn auctor seyde, so seye I:
Ek though I speke of love unfelyngly,
No wonder is, for it no thing of new is,—
A blynde man kan nat juggen wel in hewis.

IV.

Ye knowe ek that, in forme of speche is chaunge
Withinne a thowsand yere, and wordes tho
That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge
Us thynketh hem, and yet thai spake hem so,
And spedde as wele in love, as men now do:
Ek for to wynnen love, in sondry ages,
In sondry londes sondry ben usages.

V.

And forthi, if it happe in any wyse,
That heere be any lover in this place,
That herkeneth as the story wol devise,
How Troylus com to his lady grace,
And thynketh, so nolde nat I love purchace,
Or wondreth on his speche or his doynge,
I not; but it is to me no wondrynge;

VI.

For every wyght whiche that to Rome wente,
Halt nat o path, or alwey o manere;
Ek in some londe were al the gamen shente,
If that thei ferde in love as men doon here,
As thus, in opyn dęlynge or in chere,
In visitynge, in forme, or seyinge hire sawes;
For-thi men seyn, eche contree hath his lawes.

VII.

Ek scarsly ben ther in this place thre,
That han in love seyd lik and done in alle;
For to thi purpos this may liken the

And me right nought, yet al is *seyd* or schalle;
Ek some men grave in tree, some in ston walle,
As it bitit; but syn I have bigonne,
Myn auctour shal I folwen, if I konne.

VIII.

INCIPIT LIBER SECUNDUS.

In May, that moder is of monthes gladde,
That fressche floures blew, and white, and rede,
Be quike agayne, that wynter dede made,
And ful of bawme is fletynge every mede;
When Phebus dothe his bryghte bemes sprede,
Ryght in the white Bool it so bytydde
As I shal synge.—On Mayes day the thridde,

IX.

That Pandarus, for alle his wyse speche,
Felt ek his part of Loves shotes keene,
That, koude he never so wele of lovynge preche,
It made his hewe a day ful ofte grene;
So shope it, that hym fil that day a tene
In love, for whiche in wo to bedde he wente,
And made ar it was day ful many a wente.

X.

The swalwe Proignee, with a sorwful lay,
Whan morwe com, gan make hire waymentynge
Whi she forshapen was; and ever lay
Pandare abedde, half in a slomberrynge,
Til she so neygh hym made hire chiteringe,
How *Tereus* gan forth hire suster take,
That with the noyse of hire he gan awake,

XI.

And gan to calle, and dressen hym to ryse,
Remembrynge hym his erand was to done
From Troilus, and eke his grete emprise;
And caste, and knew in goode plyte was the moone
To doon viage, and take his way ful sone
Unto his neces paleys ther bysyde:
Now Janus, god of entree, thow hym gyde!

XII.

When he was com unto his neces place,
'Where is my lady,' to hire folk quod he,
And thei him tolde, and he forth in gan pace;
And fond two other ladys sete and she,
Withinne a paved parlour, and thay thre
Herden a maydyn reden hem the geeste
Of the segee of Thebes, whil hem leste.

XIII.

Quod Pandarus, 'madame, God yow see,
With al youre faire book, and alle the cumpaignye:'
'Ey, uncle myn, welcome ywys!' quod she,
And up she roos, and by the hond in hye
She took hym fast, and seyde, 'This nyght thrye,
To goode mote it torne, of yow I mette:'
And with that worde, she down on bench hym sette.

XIV.

'Ye, nece, ye shal faren wel the bette,
If God wole, alle this yere,' quod Pandarus;
'But I am sory that I have yow lette

To herknen of youre book ye preysen thus:
For Goddes love, what seyth it? tel it us,—
Is it of love? of som goode ye me leere;'
'Uncle,' quod she, 'your maistresse is nat heere.'

XV.

With that they gonnen laugh, and tho she seyde,
'Thys romaunce is of Thebes that we rede,
And we han herd how that kynge Layus deyede
Thorugh Edippus his sone, and al that dede:
And heere we stynten at thise letteres rede,
How the bysshop, as the book can telle,
Amphyorax, fil thorwh the grounde to Helle.'

XVI.

Quod Pandarus, 'Al this know I my-selve,
And alle thassege of Thebes, and the care,
For herof ben bokes ther maked twelve:
But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare,
Do wey youre barbe, and shew youre face bare;
Do wey your book, ryse up and let us daunce,
And lat us do to May som observaunce.'

XVII.

Ey! God forbede!' quod she, 'be ye mad?
Is that a wydowes lyf, so God yow save?
By *Jove* ye maken me right soore adrad,
Ye ben so wylde it semeth as ye rave!
It sate me wel bet ay in a cave
To bydde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves:
Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.'

XVIII.

'As evere thryve I,' quod this Pandarus,
'Yet koude I telle a thynge to don yow pleye:'
'Now uncle deere,' quod she, 'telle it us
For goddes love; is thanne thassege aweye?
I am of Grekes so ferde, that I deye.'
'Nay nay,' quod he, 'as evere mote I thryve,
It is a thynge wel bet than swiche fyve.'

XIX.

'Ye, holy God!' quod sche, 'what thinge is that?
What? bet than swiche fyve? *Ey* nay iwis!
For al this worlde ne kan I reden what
It sholde ben, som jape I trow is this,
And but youre selven telle us what it is,
My wit is for tarede it al to leene;
As helpe me God, I not nought what ye mene.'

XX.

'And I youre borugh, ne nevere shal, for me,
This thynge be told to yow, as mote I thryve!'
'And why so, uncle myn? whi so?' quod sche;
'By God,' quod he, 'that wil I telle as blyve;
For pruder womman is thare noon on lyve,
And ye it wist, in al the town of Troye;
I jape nought, as ever have I joye.'

XXI.

Tho gan sche wondren moore than byforn
A thousand folde, and down hire eighen caste;
For nevere, sith tyme that sche was born,

To knowe thynge desired she so faste;
And with a sygh sche sayde hym atte laste,
'Now uncle myn, I nyl yow nought displese,
Nor axen moore that may do yow disese.'

XXII.

So after this, with manye wordes gladde,
And frendely tales, and with mery cheere,
Of this and that thay playde, and gonnen wade
In many an unkouth glad and deepe matere,
As frendes doon, when they ben met ifeere;
Tyl she gan axen hym how Ector ferde,
That was the townes wal, and Grekes yerde.

XXIII.

'Ful wele, I thonke it God,' quod Pandarus,
'Save in his arme he hath a litil wounde;
And eke his freeshe brother Troylus,
The wyse worthy Ector the secounde,
In whom that al vertu liste habounde,
As alle trouthe and alle gentillesse,
Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthynesse.'

XXIV.

'In goode fayth, eem,' quod she, 'that liketh me,
Thay faren wel, God save hem bathe two!
For treweliche I halde it grete deyntee,
A kynges sone in armes wel to do,
And ben of goode condicions therto;
For greete power and moral vertue heere
Is selde yseyn in o person ifeere.'

XXV.

'In goode faith, that is sooth,' quod Pandarus;
'But by my trouthe, the kyng hath sones tweye,
That is to mene Ector and Troylus,
That certeynly, though that I scholde deye,
They ben as voyde of vyces, dar I seye,
As any men that lyven under the sonne,
Hyre myght is wyde iknowe, and what thei konne.

XXVI.

'Of Ector needeth it no more to telle;
In al this world ther nys a bettre knyght
Than he, that is of worthinesse *the* welle,
And wel moore vertue hath than myght;
This knoweth many a wys and worthi knyght;
The same prys of Troilus I seye,
God help me so, I knowe nat swiche tweye.'

XXVII.

'By God,' quod she, 'of Ector that is soth,
Of Troilus the same thing trowe I;
For, dredelees, men tellen that he dooth
In armys day by day so worthily,
And bereth him here at hoom so gentilly
To every wyght, that alle prys hath he
Of hem that me were levest preysed be.'

XXVIII.

'Ye seye right sooth ywys,' quod Pandarus;
'For yesterday, who-so hadde with hym ben,
He myghte han wondred upon Troilus,

For nevere yet so thikke a swarm of been
No fleigh, as Grekes fro hym gonne fleen;
And thorugh the felde in every wyghtes ere,
Ther nas no cry but, Troilus is thare!

XXIX.

'Now here, now thar, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes bloode; and Troylus,
Now he hem hurte, and hem alle down he caste,
Ay wher he wente it was arayede thus:
He was hire deth, and sheeld of lif for us,
That as that day ther dorste noon withstonde,
Whil that he held his blody swerd in honde.

XXX.

'Therto he is the freendlyeste man
Of gret estate, that evere I saugh my lyve:
And wher hym liste, best felaweschipe kan
To swiche as hym thynketh able for to thrive.'
And with that worde tho Pandarus as blyve
He tooke his leve, and seyde, 'I wol gon henne:'
'Nay, blame have I, *myn* uncle,' quod she thenne.

XXXI.

'What eyleth yowe to be thus wery soone,
And nameliche of wommen? wol ye so?
Nay siteth down; by God, I have to done
With yow, to speke of wisdom er *ye* go.'
And every wyght that was aboute hem tho,
That herde that, gan fer awey to stonde,
Whil thai two hadde alle that hem liste in honde.

XXXII.

When that hir tale alle brought was to an ende,
Of hyre estate, and of hire governaunce,
'Quod Pandarus, 'now is tyme I wende,
But yet I seye, ariseth, lat us daunce,
And caste youre wydowes habit to myschaunce:
What luste yow thus youre-self to disfigure,
Syn yow is tyd thus fayre an aventure?'

XXXIII.

'A! wel bythought! for luf of God,' quod she,
'Shal I nat wyten what ye mene of this?'
'No, this thyng asketh leyser,' tho quod he,
'And eke me wolde much greve iwys,
If I it tolde and ye it *toke* amys:
Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille,
Than seye a sooth that were ayeins youre wille.

XXXIV.

'For, nece *myn*, by the goddesse Mynerve,
And Juppiter, that maketh the thonder rynge,
And by the blysful Venus that I serve,
Ye ben the womman in this world lyvynge,
Withowten paramours, to my wittynge,
That I best love and lothest *am* to greve,
And that ye weten wele youre-selven I leve.'

XXXV.

'Ywys, *myn* uncle,' quod she, 'graunt mercy,
Youre frendship have I founden evere yit;
I am to *no* man holden trewely

So muche as yowe, and have so litil quyt:
And with the grace of God, *en*forth my wyt,
As in my gylt, I shal you nevere offende,
And if I have or this, I wol amende.

XXXVI.

'But for the love of God I yowe beseche,
As ye ben he that I love moste and triste,
Lat be to me youre fre*m*de maner speche,
And say to me, youre nece, what yowe liste:'
And with that word hire uncle anoon hire kiste,
And sayde, 'Gladly, leve nece dere!
Tak it for goode that I shal sa*y*e yow here.'

XXXVII.

With that she gan hire eyghen down to cast*e*,
And Pandarus to koghe gan a lyte,
And sayde, 'Nece, alway lo! to the laste,
How-so it be, that som men hem delite
With subtile art hire tales for to endyte,
Yet for alle that in hire entencioun,
Hire tale is al *for* som conclusioun.

XXXVIII.

'And sithen thende is every tales strengthe,
And this matere is so byhovely,
What shold I peynte or drawen it on lengthe
To yow, that ben my frende so faythfully?'
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Byholden hire, and loken on hire face,
And sayde, 'On swihche a myroure goode grace!'

XXXIX.

Than thought he thus, 'If I my tale endyte
Aught hard, or make a processe any while,
She shal no savour han tharin but lyte,
And trowe I wolde hire in my wil bygile;
For tendere wittes wenen al be wyle,
Ther as they kan nat pleynly understonde;
Forthi hire witte to serven wol I fonde.'

XL.

And loked on hire in a bysy wise,
And she was ware that he byhelde hire so,
And sayde, 'Lord! so faste ye mavyse!
Sey ye me nevere or now, what sey ye no?'
'Yis, yis,' quod he, 'and bett wol er I go:
But by my trowthe I thoughte now if ye
Be fortunate, for now men shal it se.

XLI.

'For to every wight som goodly aventure
Somtyme is shape, if he it kan receyven:
And if that he wol take of it no cure
When that it cometh, but wilfully it weyven,
Loo, noyther cas nor fortune hym deceyven,
But right his verray slouthe and wrechednesse:
And swich a wight is for to blame I gesse.

XLII.

'Goode aventure O bele nece, have ye
Ful lightly founden, and ye kanne it take;
And, for the love of God, and ek of me,

Catche it anon, leste aventure it slake:
What shold I longer processe of it make?
Yif me youre hond, for in this world is noon,
If that yow liste, a wyght so wel bigone.

XLIII.

'And sith I speke of goode entencion,
As I to yow have tolde wele her biforne,
And love as wel youre honour and renown,
As creature in al this world yborne:
By alle the othes that I have yow sworne,
If ye be wroth therfor or wene I lye,
Ne shal I nevere sen yow eft with eighe.

XLIV.

'Beth nought agast, ne qwaketh *not*; wherto?
Ne chaungeth nought for fere so youre hewe,
For hardely the werste of this is do;
And though my tale as now be to yow newe,
Yet trist alwey ye shalle me fynde trewe;
And were it thynge that me thoughte unsittynge,
To yow I wolde no swich tales brynge.'

XLV.

'Now, *my* goode em, for Goddes love I preye,'
Quod she, 'com of, and tel me what it is;
For both I am agast what ye wile seye,
And ek me longeth to wite it iwis;
For whether it be wel or be amys,
Sey on, lat me not in this fere dwelle.'
So wol I don, now herkeneth I shal telle:

XLVI.

'Now, nece myn, the kynges dere sone,
The goode, wyse, worthy, fresshe, and fre,
Which alwey for to don wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus so loveth the,
That, but ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
Lo, here is alle! what shold I more seye?
Doth what yow list, to mak hym lyve or deye.

XLVII.

'But if ye lat hym deyen I wol sterve,
Have here my trowth, and nece, I nyl nought lyen,
Al schold I with this knyf my throte kerve.'
With that the teres briste oute of his eighen,
And seyd, 'If that ye don us bothe deyen
Thus gilteles, than have ye fisshed fayre;
What mende ye *though* that we bothe apayre?

XLVIII.

'Allas! he whiche that is my lord so deere,
That trewe man, that noble gentyl knyght,
That naught desyreth but youre freendely cheere,
I se him deyen ther he gothe upright;
And hasteth hym with alle his fulle myght
For to ben slayn, if his fortune assente;
Allas, that God yow swich a beauté sente!

XLIX.

'If it so be that ye so cruwel be,
That of his deth yow liste nat to reche,
That is so trewe and worthy as ye se,

Namore than of a japare or a wreche,
If ye be swiche, youre beauté may not streche,
To make amend of so cruwel a dede:
Avysemente is good bifore the nede.

L.

'Wo worth the faire gemme vertuelees!
Wo worth that herb also that doth no boote!
Wo worth that beauté that is routheles!
Wo worth that wyght that tret ech under foote!
And ye, that be of beauté crop and roote,
If therwithal in yow ther be no routhe,
Thanne is it harm ye lyven, by my trouthe!

LI.

'And also thynke wel that *it* is no gaude,
For me were levere, that thow, and I, and he,
Were hanged, than I sholde ben his baude,
As heigh as men *mighte* on us alle ysee:
I am thin em, the shame were to me,
As wel as the, if that I sholde assente,
Thorwgh myn abet, that he thin honour shente.

LII.

'Now understonde, for I nought requere
To bynde yow to hym thorwgh no beheste,
But oonly that ye mak hym bettere chere
Than ye han don or this, and moore feste,
So that his lyve be saved at the leste:
This al and som, and pleynly oure entente;
God help me so, I nevere other mente.

LIII.

'Loo, this requeste is nought but skyl iwis,
No doute of reson pardee is ther noon:
I set the werste, *lest* that ye dreden thys,
Men wolde wondren sen hym come or gone:
Ther ayeny*is* answere I thus anone,
That every wyght, but he be fool of kynde,
Wol deme it love of frendshippe in his mynde.

LIV.

'What? w*h*o wol demen, though he se a man
To temple go, that he the ymages etteth?
Thynke ek, how wel and wysely that he kan
Governe hymself, that he nothynge foryeteth,
That where he comth, he prys and thanke hym geteth;
And ek therto he shal come here so selde,
What fors were it though al the town bihelde?

LV.

'Swich love of frendes regneth al this town:
And wre yow in that mantel everemoo;
And God so wys be my savacioun,
As I have seyde, youre best is to do soo:
But, good*e* nece, alway to stynte his wo,
So lat youre daunger sucred ben alyte,
That of his deth ye be nought for to wyte.'

LVI.

Creseyde, which that herd hym in this wyse,
Thoughte, 'I shal feelen what he mene iwys:'
'Now em,' quod she, 'what wold*en* ye devyse?

What is youre rede I sholde don of this?'
'That is wel seyde,' quod he, 'certeyn best is,
That ye hym love *ay*eyn for his lovynge,
As love for love is skylful guerdonynge.

LVII.

'Thynk ek how elde wasteth every houre
In eche of yow a partye of beauuté,
And therfor, er that age the devoure,
Go love, for olde thar wol no wyght of the:
Lat this proverb a lore unto yow be,
'To lat I war,' quod beauuté, 'when it paste,
And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.'

LVIII.

The kynges foole is wonte to cryen lowde,
When that *hym thynkth* a womman berth hire heighe,
'So longe mote ye lyve, and alle proude,
Tyl crowes feete be growe under youre eigh!
And sende yow thanne a myrour in to prye
In whiche ye maye se youre face a morwe!'
Nece I bydde wysshe yow no more sorwe.'

LIX.

With this he stynte, and caste adown the hede,
And she began to breste awepe anone,
And seyd, 'Allas, for wo! why nere I dede?
For of this world the feith is al agone:
Allas! what sholden straunge folke me don,
When he that for my beste freend I wende,
Ret me to love, and shold it me defende?

LX.

'Allas, I wold han tristed douteles,
That if that I, thorugh my disaventure,
Hadde loved outher hym or Achilles,
Ector, or any manner creature,
Ye nold han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreve:
This false world, allas! who may it leve!

LXI.

'What! is this al the joye and alle the feeste?
Is this youre rede? is this my blysful cas?
Is this the verray mede of youre beheste?
Is alle this peinted proces seyde, allas,
Ryght for this fyn? O lady myn Pallas,
Thow in this dredeful cas for me purveye,
For so astoned am I, that I deye.'

LXII.

With that she gan ful sorufully to syke.
'A! may it be no bet?' quod Pandarus;
'By God I shal namore com here this wyke,
And God toforne, that am mystristed thus:
I se ful wele that ye sette lyte of us,
Or of oure deth: allas, I woful wreche!
Myght he yit lyve, of me is nought to reche.

LXIII.

'O thou cruel god, O dispitouse Marte,
O Furies thre of Helle, on yow I crye,
So lat me nevere out of this house departe,

If that I ment harm or any vilanye:
But sith I se my lord moote nedes deye,
And I with hym, here I me shryve and seye,
That wikkedly ye don us bothe to deye.

LXIV.

'But sith it liketh yow that I be dede,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I nevere eten brede,
Unto I myn own hertes blode may see;
For certein I wol deye as sone as he.'
And up he sterte, and on his way he raughte,
Til she agayn hym by the lappe ykaughte.

LXV.

Criseyde, wyche that wel neigh starf for pure fere,
So ek as she was the ferfullest wight
That myghte be, and herd eke with hire ere,
And saugh the soruful ernest of the knyght,
And in his preyers saughe eke noon unright,
And for the harme that myght ek fallen more,
She gan to rew and dredde her wonder sore.

LXVI.

And thoughte thus, 'Unhappes fallen thykke
Alday for love, and in swiche manere cas,
As men ben cruel in hem-self and wykke,
And if this man here sla him-self, allas!
In my presaunce it wol be no solas.
What men wolde of it deme I kan nat seye;
It nedeth me ful sleighely for to pleye.'

LXVII.

And with a sorwful syk, she seyde threye,
'A, Lord! what me is tyd a sory chaunce,
For myn estate lith now in a jupartye,
And ek myn emes lyf is in balaunce:
But natheles, with goddes governaunce
I shal so done, myn honour shal I kepe,
And ek his lyf:' and stynte for to wepe.

LXVIII.

'Of harmes two, the lesse is for to cheese,
Yet have I levere maken hym goode chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese,
Ye seyn, ye nothynge elles me requere.'
'No, wys,' quod he, 'myn owne nece dere.'
'Now wel,' quod she, 'and I wol do my peyne,
I shal myn herte ayeynist my liste constreyne.

LXIX.

'But that I nyl nat holden hym in honde,
Ne love a man, ne kan I nought, ne may,
Ayeyns my wyl, but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour saufe, plesen hym fro day to day;
Therto nold I nat ones *han* seyde nay,
But that I drede as in my fantasye:
But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.

LXX.

'But here I make a protestacioun,
That in this processe, if ye depper go,
That certanly, for no savacion

Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
Though al the world on a day be my fo,
Ne shal I nevere on hym han other rowthe:'
'I graunt wele,' quod Pandarus, 'by my trouthe.'

LXXI.

'But may I truste wele therto,' quod he,
'That of this thynge that ye han hight me here
Ye wol it holden trewly unto me?'
Ye, *douteles*' quod she, 'myn uncle deere.'
'Ne that I shal han cause in this matere.'
Quod he, 'to pleyne, or efter yow to preche?'
'Why no, pardee! what nedeth more speche?'

LXXII.

Tho fillen they in oothere tales gladde
Tyl at the laste, 'O gooode em,' quod she tho,
'For his love whiche that us bothe made,
Tel me how firste ye westen of his woo:
Woote noon of it but ye?' he seyde, 'No:'
'Kan he wel speke of love,' quod she, 'I prey?
Tel me, for I the bet shal me *por*veye.'

LXXIII.

Tho Pandarus a litil gan to smyle,
And seyde: 'By my trowthe I wol yow telle,—
This oother day, naught gon ful longe while,
In-*with* the paleys gardyn by a welle,
Gan he and I, wel half a day to dwelle,
Ryght for to speke*n* of an ordynaunce,
How we the Grekes myghten disavaunce.

LXXIV.

'Soone after that bigonne *we* to lepe,
And casten with oure dartes to and fro,

Til at the laste, he seyde, he wolde slepe,
And on the gres adown he layde him tho;
And I ther after gan roman to and fro,
Til that I herde, as that I welke allone,
How he bygan ful wofully to grone.

LXXV.

'Tho gan I stalke hym softely byhynde,
And sykerly, the sothe for to seyne,
As I kan clepe ayeyn now to my mynde,
Right thus to love he gan hym for to pleyne;
He seyde, 'Lord, have routhe upon my peyne,
Al have I ben rebel in myn entente,
Now, meâ culpa, lord, I me repente.

LXXVI.

''O God, that at thy disposicioun
Ledest the fyn, by juste purveiaunce,
Of every wight, my lowe confession
Accepte in gree, and send me swich penaunce
As liketh the; but from desesperaunce,
That may my goost departe away fro the,
Thow be my shelde, for thi benignité.

LXXVII.

'For certes, lord, so sore hath she me wounded
That stoode in blake, with lokynge of hire eighen,
That to myn hertis botme it is isownded,
Thorugh wiche I woote I moote nedes dyen;
This is the werste, I dar me nat wryen,
And wel the hootter ben the gledis rede
That men hem wren with asshen pale and dede.'

LXXVIII.

'With that he smote his hed adown anon
And gan to motre, I note what trewely,
And I with that gan away stille gone
And lete therof, as nothynge wyste hadde I,
And come ayein anon and stode hym by,
And seyde, 'Awake, ye slepen alle to longe!
It semeth nat that love doth yow *to* longe,

LXXIX.

''That slepen swo that no man may yow wake;
Who sey evere or this so dul a man?'
'Ye, frend,' quod *he*, 'do ye youre heddes ake
For love, and lat me lyven as I kan.'
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yet made he tho as fresshe a contenaunce,
As though he scholde have led the newe daunce.

LXXX.

'This passede forth, tyl now this other day
It felle that I come romynge al allone
Into his chaumber, and fonde how that he lay
Upon his bedde; but man so sore grone
Ne herde I nevere, and what that was his mone
Ne wyste I nought, for as I was comynge
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleynynge.

LXXXI.

'Of which I toke somwhat suspecion
And ner I come, and fond he wepte soore;
And God so wys be my savacioun,

As nevere of thynge had I no rowthe more;
For neyther with engyn, ne with lore,
Unnethes myght I hym fro the deth kepe,
That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe.

LXXXII.

'And, God woot, nevere sith that I was borne
Was I so bysi no man for to preche,
Ne nevere was to wyght so depe sworne,
Or he me told who myghte ben his leche;
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,
Or al his woful wordes for to sowne,
Ne byd me naught, but ye wol se me swowne.

LXXXIII.

'But for to save his lyf, and elles nought,
And to no harme of yow, thus am I dryven;
And for the love of God that us hath wroght
Swuche chere hym doth, that he and I may lyven;
Now have I plat to yow myn herte *schryven*,
And sith ye woote that myn entent is clene,
Take hede therof, for I non evel mene.

LXXXIV.

'And right good thryft, I pray to God, have ye,
That han swich oon icaught withouten net,
And be ye wys, as ye ben fayr to se,
Wel in the ringe than is the ruby set;
Ther were nevere two so wele ymet
When ye ben his al hole, as he is youre:
Ther myghty God graunt us to se that houre!'

LXXXV.

'Nay, therof speke I nought:' 'Ha, a!' quod she,
'As helpe me God, ye shenden every dele;'
'O! mercy, dere nece,' anon, quod he,
'What so I spake I mente nought but wele,
By Mars the god, that helmed is of stele:
Now beth nought wroth, my blode, my nece dere.'
'Now wel,' quod she, 'foryeven be it here.'

LXXXVI.

With this he toke his leve, and home he wente;
A, Lord! *so* he was glad, and wel bygon!
Criseyde aros, no longer she ne stente,
But streght into hire closet wente anon,
And set hire down, as stille as any stone,
And every word gon up and down to wynde,
That he hadde seyde, as it come hire to mynde,

LXXXVII.

And wax somdele astoned in hire thought,
Right *for* the newe cas; but when that she
Was ful avysed, tho fonde she right nought
Of peril, why she aught aferde be:
For man may love of possibilité
A womman so, his herte may to-breste,
And *she* nought love ayeyn, but if hire liste.

LXXXVIII.

But as she sat allon and thoughte thus,
Ascry aroos at scarmich alle withoute,
And men cried in the strete, 'Se Troilus

Hath right now put to flyght the Grekes route.'
With that gan al hire meyné for to shoute:
'A! go we se, caste up the yates wide,
For thorwgh this strete he moote to paleys ryde;'

LXXXIX.

For oother way is to the gates noon,
Of Dardanus, there open is the cheyne:
With that come he, and alle his folke anon,
An esy pace rydynge, in routes tweyne,
Right as *his* happy day was, sothe to seyne:
For wiche men seyne may nought distourbed be
That shal bytyden of necessité.

XC.

This Troilus sat *e*on his bay stede
Alle armed save his hed ful richely,
And wonded was his hors, and gan to blede,
On wiche he roode a pase ful softely:
But swiche a knyghtely sighte trewely
As was on hym, was nought withouten faile,
To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle.

XCI.

So like a man of armes and a knyght,
He was to sen, fulfild of heigh prowesse;
For bothe he hadde a body, and a myght
To don that thynge, as wele as hardynesse;
And ek to sen hym in his gere hym dresse,
So fressh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heven upon hym for to se.

XCII.

His helme to-hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tyssew henge his bak byhynde,
His shelde to-dasshed was with swerdes and maces,
In which men myghte many an arwe fynde,
That thyrled hadde horn, and nerf, and rynde;
And ay the peple criede, 'Here comyth oure joye,
And, nexte his brother, holdere up of Troye.'

XCIII.

For which he wex a litel rede for schame
Whan he the peple upon him herde crien,
That to byholde it was a noble game,
How sobreliche he caste down his eighen:
Criseyd *anon* gan al his chere aspyen,
And leet so softe it in hire herte synken,
That to hire self she seyde, 'Who yaf me drynken?'

XCIV.

For of hire owene thought she wex al rede,
Remembrynge hire right thus, 'Lo! this is he,
Wich that myn uncle swerth he moot be dede,
But I on hym have mercy and pité:'
And with that thought, for pure ashamed she
Gan in hire hed to pulle, and that as faste,
While he and alle the peple forby paste.

XCV.

And gan to caste, and rollen up and down
Within hire thought his excellent prowesse,
And his estat, and also his renoun,

His wit, his shappe, and ek his gentilnesse;
But moost hire favour was for his destresse
Was al for hire, and thought it as a rowthe
To slane swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.

XCVI.

Now myghte som envyous jangle thus,
'This was a sodeyn love, how myghte it be
That she so lightly lovede Troylus,
Right for the firste sight?' Ye, pardé?
Now who seith so, mote he nevere ythe!
For every thynge a gynnyng hath it nede
Er alle be wrought, withouten any drede.

XCVII.

For I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf hym hire love, but that she gan enclyne
To like hym firste, and I have tald yow why
And efter that, his manhod and his pyne,
Made love withinne hire *herte* for to myne;
For which by proces, and by goode servyse
He gat hire love, and in no sodeyn wyse.

XCVIII.

And also blisful Venus, wel arayed,
Sat in hire seventhe hous of Hevene tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed
To helpen sely Troilus of his wo:
And soth to seyn, she nas nat al a fo
To Troilus, in his nativitee;
God woot that wele the sonner spedde he.

XCIX.

Now lat us stynte of Troilus a throwe,
That rideth forth, and lat us torne faste
Unto Criseyde, that henge hire hed ful lawe,
Ther as she sat allone, and gan to caste
Wheron she wold apoynte hire at the laste,
If it so were hire em ne wolde cesse,
For Troilus upon hire for to presse.

C.

And, lord! so sche gan in hire thought arguwe
In this matere, of which I have yow tolde,
And what to done best were, and what eschuwe,
That plytede she ful ofte in many folde:
Now was hire herte warm, now was it colde.
And what she thoughte, somwhat shal I wryte,
As to myn auctour listeth for tendite.

CI.

She thoughte wel, that Troilus persone
She knewe by sight and ek his gentilnesse:
And thus she seyd, 'Al were it not to done
To graunt hym love yet, for his worthinesse,
It were honor, with pleye and with gladnesse,
In honesté, with swich a lord to dele,
For myn estat, and also for his hele.

CII.

'Eke wel wot I my kynges sonne is he,
And sith he hath to se me swich delite,

If I wold outreliche his sighte flee,
Paraunter he myght have me in dispite,
Thorwgh which I myghte stond in worse plite:
Not were I wis, me hate to purchase
Withouten nede, ther I may stonde in grace.

CIII.

'In every thynge, I wot ther lith mesure;
For though a man forbede dronkennesse,
He naught forbet that every creature
Be drenkynlees for alway, as I gesse:
Ek, sith I wote for me is his destresse,
I ne aught nat for that thyng hym dispice,
Sith it is so he meneth in goode wyse.

CIV.

'And ek I knowe, of longe tyme agon,
His thewes goode, and that he is nat nyce,
Navauntour, seith men, certein is he noon,
To wys is he to don so grete a vyce:
Ne als I nyl hym nevere so cherice,
That he may mak avaunte by juste cause;
He shal me nevere bynde in swich a clause.

CV.

'Now set a caas, the hardeste is iwys,
Men myghten demen that he loveth me:
What dishonour were it unto me this?
May Ich hym lett of that? why nay, pardee!
I knowe also, and alway here and see,
Men loven wommen al bysyde hire leue,
And when hem liste namore lat hym bileue!

CVI.

'I thenk ek how able he is for to have
Of al this ilke noble town the thriftyeste,
To ben his love, so she hire honour save:
For oute and oute he is the worthyeste,
Save oonly Ector, which that is the beste;
And yit his lyf alle lith now in my cure,
But swich is love, and ek myn aventure.

CVII.

'Ne me to love a wonder is it nought;
For wele wote I my-self, so God me spede
Al wold I that noon *man* wyste of this thoughte,
I am oon the fayreste, out of drede,
And goodelyeste, who-so taketh hede,
And so men seyn in al the town of Troye;
What wonder is it though he of me have joye?

CVIII.

'I am myn owene womman, wele at ese,
I thanke it God, as efter myn estate,
Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty leese,
Withouten jalousie, or swich debat:
Shal noon housebonde seyn to me 'chek mat;'
For eyther thei ben ful of jalousie,
Or maysterful, or loven novelrye.

CIX.

'What shal I don? to what fyn lyve I thus?
Shal I nat love in cas if that me liste?
What? pardieux! I am nought religiouse;

And though that I myn herte sette at reste
Upon this knyght that is the worthyeste,
And kepe alway my honour, and my name,
By al right it may do me no schame.'

CX.

But right as when the sonne shyneth brighte
In March that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloude is put with wynde to flyght,
Which oversprat the sonne, as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorugh hire soule pace,
That overspradde hire brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for feere almoost she gan to falle.

CXI.

That thought was this:—'Allas! syn *I* am free,
Shold I now love, and putte in jupartye
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertye?
Allas! how dorste I thenken that folye?
May I nought wel in other folk aspye
Hire dredful joye, hire constreynte, and hire peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that sche nath *why* to pleyne.

CXII.

'For love is yet the moost*e* stormy lyf,
Right of hymself, that evere was bygonne;
For evere som mystruste, or nyce stryfe,
Ther is in love, som cloude is over that sonne:
Therto we wreched wommen nothynge konne,
When us is wo, but sitte, and wepe, and thynke;
Oure wreche is this oure owen wo to drynke.

CXIII.

'Also thise wikkede tonges ben so preste
To speke us harme; ek men *ben* so untrewe,
That right anon, as cessed is hire leste,
So ceseth love, and forth to love a newe:
But harme idon is don, who-so it rewe;
For though this men for love hem firste to-rende,
Ful scharpe bygynnynge breketh oft at ende.

CXIV.

'How ofte tyme hath it yknowen be
The treson, that to wommen hath ben do?
To what fyn is swich love I kan nat se,
Or wher bicometh it when that it is ago;
There is no wyght that woot, I trowe so,
Wher it bicometh; lo, no wight on it sporneth;
That arst was nothynge, into nought it torneth.

CXV.

'How bisy, if I love, ek most I be
To plesen hem that jangle of love, and demen,
And coye hem, *that* they seye noon harme of me;
For though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Alle be for harme that folk hire frendes quemen;
And who may stoppen every wykked tonge,
Or sown of belles while that thei ben ronge?'

CXVI.

And efter that hire thought gan for to clere
And seyde, 'He which *that* nothynge undertaketh
Nothynge nacheveth, be hym leve or deere;'

And with another thought hire herte qwaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh,
Now hoot, now cold; but thus bytwixen tweye
Tho rist hire up, and *went* hire for to pleye.

CXVII.

Adown the steyre anon right tho she wente
Into the gardyn with hire neces thre,
And up and down ther made many a wente,
Flexippe *and* she, Tharbe, and Antigone,
To pleyen, that it joye was for to se;
And other of hire wommen, a grete route,
Hire folweden in the gardyn alle aboute.

CXVIII.

This yerde was large, and rayled alle thaleyes,
And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded alle the wayes,
In whiche she walketh arm in arme betwene;
Til at the laste Antigone the shene
Gan on a Trojan songe to syngen clere,
That it an hevene was hire vois to here.

CXIX.

She seyde, ' O Love, to whom I have, and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best kan to *you*, lord, yeve Ich al
For everemo myn hertes lust to rente:
For nevere yet thī grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lyf to lede
In alle joye and seurté, oute of drede.

CXX.

'The blisful god hath me so wele besette
In love iwis, that alle that bereth lyf
Ymagynen ne koude how to ben bett;
For, lord, withowten jalousye or stryf
I love oon which that moost is ententif
To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
That evere was, and leest with harme destreyned.

CXXI.

'As he that is the wel of worthynesse,
Of trowthe ground, myrour of goodelyhede,
Of wit Apollo, stoon of *siker*nesse,
Of vertue roote, of lust fynder and hede,
Thorugh *which* is alle sorwe fro me dede:
Iwis I love hym best, so doth he me;
Now goode thryft have he, wher-so that he be!

CXXII.

'Whom shold I thanken but yow, God of Love,
Of alle this blisse in which to bathe I gynne?
And thanked be ye, Lord, for that I love!
This is the righte lyf that I am inne,
To flemen alle manere vyce and synne:
This doth me so to vertue for tentende
That day by day I in my wyl amende.

CXXIII.

'And who-so seith that for to love is vice,
Or thraldom, though he fele in it destressse,

He outher is envyous, or right nyce,
Or is unmyghty for his shrewednesse,
To loven, for swich maner folk I gesse
Defamen Love, as nothynge of it knowe,
They speken *mych* but they benten nevere his bowe.

CXXIV.

'What is the sonne wors of kynde righte,
Though that a man, *for* fieblenesse of his eighen,
May not endure on it to se for bryghte?
Or love the wors, theigh wreches on it crien?
No wele is worth that may no sorwe dryen;
And forthy, who that hath *an* hede of verre
Fro caste of stones war hym in the werre.

CXXV.

'But I with al myn herte and alle my myght,
As I have seyd, wol love unto my laste
My dere herte and alle myn owen knyght,
In whiche myn herte growen is so faste
And his in me, that it schal evere laste:
Alle dredde I firste to love hym to bigynne,
Now wote I wel ther is no peril inne.'

CXXVI.

And of hire song right with that worde she stente,
And therwithalle, 'Now, nece,' quod Criseyde,
'Who made this songe now with so goode entente?'
Antigone answerde anoon and seyde,
'Madam, iwis, the goodelyeste mayde
Of grete estate in al the town of Troye,
And let hire lyf in moost honour and joye.'

CXXVII.

'Forsothe so it semeth by hire songe,'
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan therwith to syke,
And seyd, 'Lord, is ther swiche blisse amonge
Thise lovers, as they *k*onnen faire endite?'
'Ye, ywis,' quod fresshe Antigone the white;
'For al the folk that han or ben on lyve
Ne konne wel the blisse of love descryve.

CXXVIII.

'But wene ye that every wreche woot
The parfit blisse of love? why nay, iwys!
They wenen al be love if oon be hote;
Do way, do way! they wote nothyng of this!
Men moste axe at seintes if it is
Aught fayre in heven; why? for they kan telle;
And axen fendes, is it foule in Helle.'

CXXIX.

Criseyde unto that purpos nought answerde,
But seyde, 'Iwis it wol be nyght as faste,'
But every word, which that she of hire herde,
She gan to prenten in *hire* herte faste,
And ay gan love hire lesse for tagaste
Than it dyde erst, and synken in hire herte,
That she wax somwhat able to converte.

CXXX.

The dayes honour, and the hevenes eye,
The nyghtes foo, al this clepe I the sonne,

Gan westren faste, and dounward for to wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours yronne;
And white thynges wexen dymme and donne
For lakke of lyght, and sterres for tapere
That she and al hire folk in wente yfere.

CXXXI.

So when it liked hire to go to reste,
And voyded weren they that voyden aughte,
She seyde, that to slepen wel hire leste:
Hire wommen soon *un*tyl hire bed hire broughte:
When al was hust, than lay she stil and thoughte
Of al this thynge the manere and the wyse;
Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse.

CXXXII.

A nyghtyngale, upon a cedre grene
Under the chaumber wal ther as she lay,
Ful lowde songe ayein the moone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hire herte fresshe and gay;
That herkned she so longe in goode entente,
Tyl at the laste the dede slepe hire hente.

CXXXIII.

And as she slepe, anoon right tho hire mette,
How that an egle, fethered white as bone,
Under hire breste his longe clewes sette,
And out hire herte he rent, and that anon,
And dide his hert into hire breste to gon;
Of whiche she naught agroos ne no thyng smerte,
And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

CXXXIV.

Now lat hire slepe, and we oure tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to palays ryden,
Fro the scarmich of the whiche I *yow* tolde,
And in his chaumber sit, and hath abyden,
Til two or thre of his messagers yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten hym ful faste,
Til they hym fonde, and broughte hym at the laste.

CXXXV.

This Pandarus come lepynge in atones,
And seyde thus, 'Who hath ben wel *y*bette
To day with swerdes. and with sleynge stones,
But Troilus, that hath kaughte hym an hete?'
And gan to jape, and seyde, 'Lorde, ye swete!
But ris and lat us soupe, and go to reste;'
And *he* answerde hym, 'Do we as the leste.'

CXXXVI.

With alle the haste goodely that they myghte,
They spede hem fro the soper unto bedde,
And every wyght oute at the dore hym dyghte,
And wher hym leste, upon his way he spedde,
But Troilus, *that* thought his herte bledde
For wo, til that he herde som tydynge,
He seyde, 'Frende, shal I now wepe or syng?'

CXXXVII.

Quod Pandarus, 'Li stil! and lat me slepe,
And don thin hode, thy nedes spedde be,
And chese if thow wilte synge or daunce or lepe;

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CCCXIV.

Now lat hire slepe, and we oure tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleys ryden
Fro the scarmuch of the which I yow tolde,
And in his chambre sit and hath abyden
Til two or three of his meyne hym hyden,
For Pandarus, and soughten hym til they
Hym founde, and unarmed hym al thre.

CCCXV.

This Pandarus com[illegible]
And seyde thus: [illegible]
To day with swerdes as [illegible]
But Troilus, that [illegible]
And gan to [illegible]
But ris and [illegible]
And he answerde [illegible]

CCCXVI.

With alle the haste goodly [illegible]
They spede hem fro the [illegible]
And every wyght gan at [illegible]
And wher hym leste, upon [illegible]
But Troilus, that thought [illegible]
For wo, til that he [illegible]
He seyde, "Frende [illegible]

Quod Pandarus
And doo this

At shorte wordes thow shalt trowe me:—
Sir, my nece wol doen wel by the,
And love the beste, by God and by my trouthe,
But lakke of pursuyte mak it in thi slouthe.

CXXXVIII.

'For thus ferforth I have thy worke bigonne,
Fro day to day, til this day by the morwe,
Hire love of frendship have I to the wonne,
And also hath she layd hire faith to borwe;
Algate a foot is hameled of thi sorwe;
What shold I lenger sermon of it holde?
As ye han herd bifore, al he hym tolde.

CXXXIX.

But right as floures, thorugh the cold of nyghte
Yclosed, stowpen on her stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem ayein the sonne brighte,
And spreden on hire kynde cours by rowe;
Right so gan tho his eghen up to throwe
This Troilus, and seyde, 'O Venus dere,
Thi might, thi grace, yheried be it here!'

CXL.

And to Pandarus he held up both his hondes,
And seyde, 'Lord! al thin be that I have;
For I am hole, al brosten ben my bondes;
A thousand Trojans who so that me yave,
Ech efter other, God so wys me save,
Ne myghte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for joie, it wol to-sterte.

CXLI.

'But, lord! how shal I don? how shal I lyven?
Whan shal I next my deere herte see
How shal this longe tyme away be dryven,
Til that thow be ayein at hire fro me?
Thow mayst answere, 'abid, abid!' but he
That hangeth by the nekke, soth to seyne,
In grete disese abideth for the peyne.'

CXLII.

'Al esily now, for the love of Marte,'
Quod Pandarus, 'for every thynge hath tyme;
So longe abid til that the nyght departe,
For also siker as thow list here bi me,
And God toforne I wol be thare at pryme,
And for thi werk somwhat as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge leye.

CXLIII.

'For, pardé, God wote, I have evere yit
Ben redy the to serve, and to this nyght
Have naught feyned, but emforth my wit
Don al thi luste, and shal with alle my myght;
Do now as *I* shal seyne, and fare arighte;
And if thow nylt, wyte al thi-self thi care,
On me is nought alonge thin yvel fare.

CXLIV.

'I woote wel, that thow wyser art than I
A thowsand fold; but if I were as thow,
God helpe me so, as I wolde outrely

Of myn owen honde write hire right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hire tellen how
I ferd amys, and hire biseche of routhe:
Now helpe thiself, and leve it nought for slouthe.

CXLV.

'And I my-self wol therwith to hire gone,
And when thow woste that I am with hire there,
Worth thow upon a coursur right anoon,
Ye hardily! right in thi beste gere,
And ride forth by the place, as nought it were,
And thow shalt fynde us, if I may, sittynge
At som wyndow into the strete lokynge.

CXLVI.

'And if the leste, than maistow us salue,
And upon me make thow thy contenaunce,
But, by thi lif, bewar and faste eschue
To tarien ought; God schilde us fro mischaunce!
Ride forth thy way, and hold thy governaunce,
And we shal speke of the somwhat I trowe,
When thow art gon, to don thyn eris glowe.

CXLVII.

'Touchynge thi lettre, thow ert wyse ynough,
I wot thow nylt it digneliche endite,
As make it with thyse argumentez tough,
Ne scryvenyssh or craftily thow it write;
Byblotte it with thi teris ek a lite,
And if thow write a goodely worde al softe,
Though it be goode, reherce it nought to ofte.

CXLVIII.

'For though the beste harppour upon lyve
Wold upon the beste sowned joly harpe
That evere was, with alle his fyngeres fyve
Touche ay o strenge or ay o warbul harpe,
Were his nayles poyntes nevere so scharpe,
It sholde maken every wyght to dulle,
To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.

CXLIX.

'Ne jompre ek no discordant thyng yfere,
As thus, to usen termes of fisyk;
In loves termes hold of thy matere
The forme alway, and do that it be like;
For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pike
With asses feet, and hedde it as an ape,
It cordeth naught, so nere it but a jape.'

CL.

This conseil lyked wele unto Troilus,
But as a dredful lovere he seyde this:—
'Allas, my dere brother Pandarus,
I am aschamed for to wryte, iwis,
Leste of myn innocence I seyde amys,
Or that she nolde it for despit receyve;
Than were I ded, ther myght it nothyng weyve.'

CLI.

To that Pandare answerde, 'If the leste,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith gon;
For by that Lord that formed est and weste,

I hope of hit to brynge answere anoon
Right of hire honde, and if that thow nylt noon
Lat be, and sory mote he ben his lyve,
Ayeyn thi lust that helpeth the to thrive.'

CLII.

Quod Troilus, 'Depardieux, ich assente;
Sith that the lest, I wil arise and wryte;
And blisful *God* pray ich, with goode entente,
The vyage and the letre I shal endite,
So spede it, and thow, Minerva the whyte,
Yif thow me wit my letre to devyse;'
And sette hym down, and wrot right in this wyse.

CLIII.

First he gan hire his righte lady calle,
His hertes lif, his lust, his sorwes leche,
His blisse, and ek thise other termes alle,
That in swich cas this lovers alle seche;
And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche,
He gan hym recomaunde unto hire grace;
To telle alle how, it axeth muchel space.

CLIV.

And efter this ful lowely he hire preyde
To be nought wroth, theigh he of his folye
So hardy was to hire to write, and seyde
That love it made, or elles moost he dye,
And pytously gan mercy for to crye.
And efter that he seyde, and leigh ful lowde,
Hym-self was litel worth, and lesse he koude.

CLV.

And *that* she shold han his konnynge excused,
That litel was, and ek he dradde hire so,
And his unworthynesse he ay acused:
And after that than gan he telle his wo,
But that was endeles withouten hoo;
And seyde, he wolde in trouth alway hym holde,
And radde it over, and gan the letre folde.

CLVI.

And with hise salte teris gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wex deliverliche and rathe;
Therwith a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He kiste tho the letre that he shette,
And seyde, 'Letre, a blisful destyné
The shapen is, my lady shal the se.'

CLVII.

This Pandare tooke the letre, and that by tyme
A-morwe, and to his neces paleys sterte,
And faste he swore that it was passed prime,
And gan to joye, and seyde, 'Ywis myn herte,
So frésshe it is, alle-though it soore smerte,
I may naught slepe nevere a Mayes morwe,
I have a joly wo, a lusty sorwe.'

CLVIII.

Creseyde, when that she hire uncle herde,
Wth dredeful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his comynge, thus answerde:—

'Now by youre fey, myn uncle,' quod she, 'dere,
What maner wyndes gideth yow now here?
Tel us youre joly wo, and youre penaunce,
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce.'

CLIX.

'By God,' quod *he*, 'I hope alway byhynde!'
And she to laugh it thoughte hire herte breste:
Quod Pandarus, 'Looke alwey *that* ye fynde
Game in myn hood; but herkeneth if yow leste,
Ther is right now come into towne a gest,
A Greke aspie, and telleth newe thynges,
For which I come to telle yow tydynges.

CLX.

'Into the gardyn go we, and ye shal here
Al pryvely of this a longe sermon:'
With that thei wenten, arm in arm yfere,
Into the gardyn from the chaumbre doun.
And when that he so fer was, that the soun
Of that he spake no man heren myghte,
He seyd hire thus, and out the letre plyghte.

CLXI.

'Lo, he that is al holly youres free,
Hym recomaundeth lowly to youre grace,
And sent yow this letre here by me;
Avyseth yow on it, when ye han space,
And of som goodely answere yow purchace;
Or, helpe me God, so pleynly for to seyne,
He may not lange lyven for his peyne.

CLXII.

Ful dredfully tho gan she stonde stylle,
And toke it nought, but al hire humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and seyde, 'Scrit ne bille,
For love of God, that toucheth swiche matere,
Ne brynge me noon! and also, uncle dere,
To myn estat have more rewarde I preye
Than to hise lust, what shold I more seye.

CLXIII.

And looketh now if this be resonable,
And letteth nought, for favour ne for slouthe,
To seyne a sothe; now were it covenable
To myn estat, by God, and by youre trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of hym routhe,
In harmynge of my-self or in repreve?
Ber it ayeyn, for hym that ye on leve.'

CLXIV.

This Pandarus gan on hire for to stare,
And seyde, 'Now is this *the* grettest wonder
That evere I seygh! lat be this nyce fare!
To deth mote I be smyten with thunder,
If for the cité which *that* stondeth yonder,
Walde I a letre unto yow brynge or take,
To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?

CLXV.

'But thus ye faren wel neigh al and some,
That he that moste desireth yow to serve,
Of hym ye reche leest wher he bycome,

And whether that he lyve, or elles sterve:
But for al that that evere I may deserve,
Refuse it naughte, quod he, and hynte hire faste,
And in hire bosom the letre doun he thraste.

CLXVI.

And seyde hire, 'Now caste *it* awey anoon
That folke may seyne, and gauren on us tweye.'
Quod she, 'I kan abide til they be gone;'
And gan to smyle, and seyde hym, 'Em, I preye
Swiche answer as yow list youre-self purveye:
For trewely I nyl no letre wryte:'
'No? than wol I,' quod he, 'so ye endite.'

CLXVII.

Therwith she lough, and seyde, 'Go we dyne;'
And he gan at hym-self to japen faste,
And seyde, 'Nece, I have so grete a pyne
For love, that evereich other day I faste,'
And gan his beste japes forth to caste;
And made hire so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughtere wende for to deye.

CLXVIII.

And whan that she was comen into the halle,
'Now em,' quod she, 'we wol go dyne anon;'
And gan some of hire wommen to hire calle,
And streght into hire chaumber gan she gon;
But of hire besynesse this was oon,
Amonges other thynges, out of drede,
Ful pryvely this letre for to rede.

CLXIX.

Avysed word by word in every lyne,
And fonde no lakke, she thoughte he koude goode;
And up it putte, and wente hire in to dyne;
And Pandarus, that in a stodye stode,
Er he was war, she toke *hym* by the hoode,
And seyde, 'Ye *were* caughte er that ye wiste!'
'I vouchesauf,' quod he, 'do what yow liste.'

CLXX.

Tho wesshen they, and sette hem doun and ete;
And after noon ful sleighly Pandarus
Gan drawe hym to the wyndow next the strete,
And seyde, 'Nece, who hath arrayed thus
The yonder house, that stant aforyeynes us?'
'Which house?' quod she, and gan for to byholde,
And knewe it wele, and whas it was hym tolde.

CLXXI.

And fillen forthe in speche of thynges smale,
And seten in the wyndowe bothe tweye:
When Pandarus saugh tyme unto his tale,
And saugh wel that hire folk weren al aweye:
'Now nece myne,' quod he, 'tel on I seye;
How liketh yow the letre that ye woote?
Kan he thereon? for by my trouthe I noot.'

CLXXII.

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to homme, and seide, 'So, I trowe;'
'Aquyte hym wel, for Goddes love!' quod he,

'My-self to medes wol the letre sowe,'
And helde his hondes up, and *fil* on knowe;
'Now gode nece, be it never so lite,
Yif me the labour it to sow and plyte.'

CLXXIII.

'Ye, for I kan so wryten,' quod she tho,
'And ek I noot what I sholde to hym seye:'
'Nay, nece,' quod Pandare, 'sey not so;
Yett at the leest, thonketh hym, I preye,
Of his goode wil, and doth hym not to deye;
Now for the love of me, my nece dere,
Refuseth nat at this tyme my preyere.'

CXXLIV.

'Depardieux,' quod she, 'God lene al be wele!
God helpe me so, this is the firste lettre
That evere I wrote, ye, al or any dele;'
And into a closett, for tavyse hire bettre,
She wente allone, and gan her herte unfettre
Out of desdaynous prison but a lite;
And sette hire doun, and gan a letre write.

CLXXV.

Of which to telle in shorte is myn entent
Theffect, as fer as I kan understonde:—
She thanked hym of al that he wel mente
Towardes hire, but holden hym in honde
She nolde nought, ne make hire-selfen bonde
In love; but as his sister, hym to plese,
She wolde fayne to don his herte an ese.

CLXXVI.

Sche schette it, and into Pandare gan gone
Ther as he satte, and loked into the strete,
And doun she sette hire by hym on a stone
Of jasper, on a quysshen gold ybette,
And seyde, 'As wysly help me God the grete,
I nevere dide a thynge with more peyne,
Than writyn this, to whiche ye me constreyne.'

CLXXVII.

And toke it hym: he thanked hire and seyde,
'God woot of thynge ful often loth bygonne
Cometh ende goode, and, nece myn Creseyde,
That ye to hym of harde now ben ywonne,
Ought he be gladde, by God and yonder sonne:
For why? men seith impressyons lighte
Ful lightely ben ay redy to the flyghte.

CLXXVIII.

'But ye han pleyed the tiraunt neigh to longe,
And harde was youre herte for to grave;
Now stynte, that ye no lenger on it honge,
Al walde ye the fourme of daunger save,
But hasteth yow to don hym joye have;
For trusteth wel, to longe ydon hardnesse
Causeth despite ful often for destresse.

CLXXIX.

And right as they declamede this matere,
Lo! Troylus, right at the stretes ende,
Com ridynge, with his tenthe some yfeere,

Al softely, and thiderward gan bende
Ther as thei sete, as was his wey to wende
To payleysse-ward, and Pandarus hym aspiede,
And seyde, 'Nece, ise who comth here ryde.

CLXXX.

'O fle nought in,' he seth us I suppose,
'Lest he may thynken that ye hym eschewe.'
'Nay, nay,' quod she, and wex as rede as rose;
With that he gan hire humbly to salwe
With dredeful chere, and oft his hewes muwe;
And up his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked on Pandare, and forth he paste.

CLXXXI.

God woot if he satt on his hors aright,
Or goodely was byseyn that ilke day!
God woot wher he was like a manly knyghte!
What shold I dretche, or telle of his array?
Criseyde, which that al this thynges sey,
To telle in short, hire liked alle yfeere,
His persone, his array, his look, his chere,

CLXXXII.

His goodely manere, and his gentilesse,
So wel that nevere sith that she was borne,
Ne hadde she swiche routhe of his distresse;
And how so sche harde hath ben here biforne,
To God hope I she hath nowe caught a thorne;
She shal nought pul it out this nexte weke;
God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!

CLXXXIII.

Pandare, which that stood hire faste by,
Felt iren hoot, and he bigan to smyte,
And seyde, 'Nece, I preye yow hertely,
Telle me that I shal axen yow a lyte:—
A womman that were of his deth to wyte
Withouten his gylte, but for hire lakked routhe,
Were it wele don?' quod she, 'Nay, by my trouthe!'

CLXXXIV.

'God help me so,' quod he, 'ye say me soth,
Ye felen wele youre-self that I naught lye;
Loo, yonde he rideth!' Quod she, 'Ye, so he doth:'
'Wele,' quod Pandare, 'as I have tolde yow thrye,
Lat be youre nyce shame and youre folye,
And spek with hym in esynge of his herte,
Lat nyceté nat do yow bathe smerte.'

CLXXXV.

But theron was to heven and to doone;
Considered al thynge, it may nat be,
And why? for shame; and it were eke to soone
To graunten hym so grete a liberté:
For pleynly hire entente, as seyde she,
Was for to love hym unwyste, if she myghte,
And guerdon hym with nothynge but with sighte.

CLXXXVI.

But Pandarus thought it shal nought be so;
Yf that I may, this nyce opinyon
Schal nought be holden fully yeres two,

What shold I mak of this a longe sermone?
He most assente on that conclusioun,
As for the tyme; and when that it was even,
And alle was wele, he roos and toke his leve.

CLXXXVII.

And on his wey ful fast homwarde he spedde,
And right for joye he felt his herte daunce,
And Troilus he fond allone abedde,
That lay, as dose this lovers in a traunce,
Bytwyxen hope and derke desesperaunce;
But Pandarus, right at hys incomynge,
He song, as who seith, '*Lo*, somwhat I brynge!'

CLXXXVIII.

And seyde, 'Who is in his bed so soone
Yburyed thus?' 'It am I, frende,' quod he;
'Who? Troilus? nay, help me so the moone,'
Quod Pandarus, 'thow shalt arise and se
A charme that was sent right now to the,
The whiche kan helen the of thyn accesse,
If thow do forthwith al thi besynesse.'

CLXXXIX.

'Ye, thorugh the myght of God!' quod Troilus;
And Pandarus gan hym the letre take,
And seyde, 'Pardee! God hath holpen us;
Have here a light, and loke on alle the blake.'
But! ofte gan the herte glade and qwake
Of Troilus, whil that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave hym hope or drede.

CXC.

But finaly he toke al for the beste
That she hym wroot, for somwhat he bihelde,
On which hym thought he myght his herte reste,
Al covered she the wordes under shelde;
Thus to the more worthy part he helde,
That, what for hope, and Pandarus biheste,
His grete wo for-yede he at the leeste.

CXCI.

But as we may al day oure-selven se,
Throw more wode or cole *the* more fire;
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encreesseth ek desire;
Or as an ook comth of a litel spire,
So thorwgh this letre, which that she hym sente,
Encressen gan desir of which he brente.

CXCII.

Wherfor I seye alwey, that day and nyghte
This Troilus gan to desire moore
Than he dide arst thorugh hope, and *dide* his myghte
To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And wryten to hire of his sorwes soore
Fro day to day; he leet it nought refreyde,
That by Pandare he wroot somwhat or seyde.

CXCIII.

And dide also his other observaunce,
That tille a lover longeth in this cas;
And efter that thise dees torned on chaunce,

So was he outher glad, or seyde allas,
And helde after his gestes ay his pas;
And eftir swich answere as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outher gladde.

CXCIV.

But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pytously gan ay til hym to pleyne,
And hym bisoughte of rede, and som socours;
And Pandarus, that sey his woode peyne,
Wex wel neigh dede for routhe, soth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste,
Som of his wo to slen, and that as faste.

CXCV.

And seyde, 'Lorde, and frende, and brother dere,
God woot thi disese doth me wo;
But wiltow stynten al this woful chere,
And, by my trouthe, er it be dayes two,
And God toforn, yet shal I shape it so,
That thow schalt come unto a certeyn place,
Ther as thow maist thiself hire preye of grace.

CXCVI.

'And certeynly, I noot if thow it woste,
But tho that ben expert in love it seye,
It is oon of the thynges forthreth moste,
A man to have a leyser for to preye,
And syker place his wo for to bywreye;
For in good hert it moot som routhe impresse
To here and se the giltelees in destresse.

CXCVII.

'Paraunter thynkestow:—Though it be so,
Thy kynde wolde don hire to begynne
To han a maner routhe upon my wo;
Seith Daunger:—Nay, thow shalt me nevere wynne;
So reuleth hire hire hertes goost withinne,
That though she bende, yet she stant on roote;
What in effect is this unto my boote?

CXCVIII.

'Thenk here ayeins, that when the stordy ooke
On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,
Receyved hath the happy fallynge stroke,
The grete swough doth it come al at ones,
As don thise rokkes or thise mylne stones;
For swifter course cometh thynge that is of wyghte
When it descendeth, than don thynges lighte.

CXCIX.

'But reed that boweth dowen with every blaste,
Ful lightly, cesse *the* wynde, it wil arise,
But so nyl nought an ook when it is caste;
It nedeth me nought the longe to forbise,
Men shal rejoysen of a grete empryse
Acheved wel, and stant withouten doute,
Al han men ben the longer theraboute.

CC.

'But, Troilus, that tel me, if the lest,
A thynge now which that I shal axen the;
Whiche is thi brother that thow lovest best,

As in thi verray hertes pryvyté?'
'Iwis, my brother Deiphebus,' quod he.
'Now,' quod Pandare, 'er houres twies twelve,
He shal the ese, unwyst of it hymselve.

CCI.

'Now lat malone, and werken as I may,'
Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho,
Which hadde his lord and grete frend ben ay,
Save Troilus no man he lovede so:
To tel in shorte, withouten wordes mo,
Quod Pandarus, 'I preye yow that ye be
Frende to a cause which that toucheth me.'

CCII.

'Yis, pardé!' quod Deiphebus, 'wel thow woost
In al that ever Y may, and God tofore,
Al nere it but for man I love moost,
My brother Troilus; but sey wherfore
It is; for sith that day that I was bore,
I nas ne nevere mo to ben, I thynke,
Ayeins a thynge that myghte the forthynke.'

CCIII.

Pandare gan hym thanke, and to hym seyde,
'Lo! Sire I have a lady in this town
That is my nece, and called is Cryseyde,
Which som men wolden don oppression,
And wrongfully han hire possession;
Wherfor I of your lordshíp yow beseche
Te ben oure frend, withouten more speche.'

CCIV.

Deiphebus hym answerde:—'O, is nat this
That thow of spekest to me thus straungely,
Criseyde my frende?' He seyde 'Yis.'
'Than nedeth,' quod Deiphebus, 'hardely,
Namore to speke; for trusteth wel that I
Wol be hire champyon with spore and yerde,
I roughte naught though alle hire foos it herde.

CCV.

'But telle me thow, that woost alle this matere,
How myght I beste avaylen now; lat se?'
Quod Pandarus, 'If ye, my lord so dere,
Wolden as now do this honour to me,
To preyen hire to morwe, lo, that she
Com unto yow, hire pleyntes to devyse,
Hire adversaries wold of it agryse.

CCVI.

And yif I more dorst preye yow as now,
And chargen yow to han so grete travaile,
To han some of youre brethern here with yow,
That myghte to hire cause bet avayle,
Than woot I wele she myghte nevere fayle
For to ben holpen, what at youre instaunce,
What with hire other frendes generaunce.'

CCVII.

Deiphebus, which that comen was of kynde
To alle honour and bounté to consente,
Answerde, 'It shal be don; and I kan fynde

Yet grettere helpe to this in myn entente:
What wiltow seyn, if I for Eleyne sente
To speke of this? I trow it be the beste,
For she may leden Paris as hire lyste. 1449

CCVIII.

'Of Ector, wiche that is my lorde, my brother,
It nedeth nought to preye hym frende to be;
For I have herde hym, o tyme and ek other,
Speke of Criseyde swich honour, that he
May seye no bet, swich hap to hym hath she;
It nedeth nought hise helpes for *to* crave,
He shal be swiche, right as we wol hym have.

CCIX.

'Spek thow thi-self also to Troylus
On my bihalve, and preye hym with us dyne.'
'Sir, al this shal be don,' quod Pandarus:
And took his leve, and nevere gan to fyne, 1460
But to his neces house, as streght as lyne,
He com, and fond hire fro the mete arise,
And sette hym down, and spak right in this wyse:

CCX.

He seyde, 'O verray God! so have I ronne!
Lo, nece myn! se ye nought how I swete?
I not whether ye the more thank me konne:
Be *ye* nought ware how false Polyphete
Is now aboute eftsones for to plete,
And brynge on yow advocacies newe?'
'I! no!' quod she, and chaunged al hire hewe.

CCXI.

'What? is he more aboute me to dreche
And don me wronge? what shal I don, allas?
Yet of hymself nothynge ne wolde I reche,
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That ben his frendes in swich manere cas;
But for the love of God, myn uncle dere,
No fors of that, lat hym han alle ifere.

CCXII.

'Withouten that I have anough for us.'
'Nay,' quod Pandare, 'it shal no thyng be so;
For I have ben right now at Deiphebus,
And Ector, and myne other lordes mo,
And shortly maked eche of hem his foo,
That, by my thryft, he shal it nevere wynne,
For aught he kan, when so that he bygynne.'

CCXIII.

And as thei casten what was best to done,
Deiphebus of his owen curtasye
Com hire to preye, in his propere persone,
To holde hym on the morwe compaignie
At dyner, which she wolde nought denye,
But goodely gan to his preyer obeye,
He thanked hire, and wente upon his weye.

CCXIV.

When this was don, this Pandare up anon,
To telle in shorte, and forth *he* gan to wende,
To Troilus, as stille as any stoone,

And *al* this thynge he told hym, word and ende;
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende,
And seyde hym, 'Now, is tyme, if that thow konne,
To bere the wele to morwe, and alle is wonne.

CCXV.

'Now speke, now preye, now pitously compleyne,
Lat nought for nyce shame, or drede or slouthe;
Sometyme a man mot telle his owene peyne;
Bileve it, and she shal han on the routhe;
Thow shalt be saved by thi feithe, in trouthe;
But wel woot I, thow art now in *a* drede,
And what it is, I leye I kanne arede.

CCXVI.

'Thow thynkest now, "How sholde I don al this,
For by my cheres mosten folk aspye,
That for hire love is that I fare amys,
Yet hadde I levere unwyste for sorwe die:"
Now thynke nought so, for thow dost grete folye,
For I righte now have founden a manere
Of sleight, for to coveren al thi chere.

CCXVII.

'Thow shalt gon over nyght, and that *as*-blyve,
To Deiphebus house, as the to pleye,
Thy malady awey the bet to dryve,
For-why thou semest sike, soth for to seye;
So after that, don in thi bedde the leye,
And seye thou maiste no longer up endure,
And lye right thare, and byd thin aventure.

CCXVIII.

'Sey that thy fevere is wonte the for to take
The same tyme, and lasten tyl on morwe;
And lat se now how wel thow kanst it make;
For, pardé, sik is he that is in sorwe.
Go now, farewel! and Venus here to borwe!
I hope, and thow this purpos holde ferme,
Thi grace she shal fully ther conferme.'

CCXIX.

Quod Troilus, 'Iwis now nedeles
Conseylest me, that sikliche I me feyne,
For I am sik in ernest, douteles,
So that wel neigh I sterve for the peyne.'
Quod Pandarus, 'Thow shalt the bettere pleyne,
And hast *the* lasse nede *to* conterfete,
For hym men demen hoote that men seen swete.

CCXX.

'Lo, holde the at thi triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deere unto thi bowe dryve.'
Therwith he took hise leve al softely,
And Troilus to paleys wente blyve,
So glad ne was he nevere in alle his lyve;
And to Pandarus reede gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at nyght he wente.

CCXXI.

What nedeth yow to tellen alle the chere
That Deiphebus unto his brother made?
Or his accesse, or his siklych manere,

How men gan hym with clothes for to lade,
Than he was leyde, and how men wolde hym glade;
But al for noughte, he helde forth ay the wyse
That ye han herde Pandare er this devyse.

CCXXII.

But certeyn is, er Troilus hym leyde,
Deiphebus had hym preyed over nyght
To ben a frend and helpynge to Criseyde;
God woot, that he it graunted anon right
To ben hire full*e* frende with al his myght:
But swich a nede was to prey hym thenne,
As for to bidde a woode man for to renne.

CCXXIII.

The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme
Of meele-tide that the faire queene Eleyne
Shapte hire to ben, an houre efter the prime,
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
But as his suster, homly, soth to seyne,
She come to dyner in hire pleyne entente;
But God and Pandare, wiste what al this mente.

CCXXIV.

Com ek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
Antigone hire suster, Tharbe also;
But flee we now, prolixité beste is,
For love of God, and lat us faste go
Right to theffect, withouten tales mo,
Why al this folk assemlede in this place,
And lat us of hire saluynges pace.

CCXXV.

Grete honour dide hem Deiphebus certein,
And fedde hem wel, with al that myghte like;
But everemo, allas, was his refreyne:
'My goode brother Troilus that sike
Lyth yet,' and therwithalle he gan to sike,
And efter that he peyned hym to glade
Hem as he myght, and chere goode he made.

CCXXVI.

Compleyned eke Eleyne of his sikenesse
So feithfully, that pité was to here,
And every wight gan wexen for *tha*ccesse
A leche anon, and seyde, 'in this manere
Men curen folk,—This charme I wol yow leere;'
But ther sat oon, al liste hire naught to teche,
That thoughte, beste koude I yet ben his leche.

CCXXVII.

After compleynt hym gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yet when som wight hath bygonne
To preyse a man, and *up* with prys him rayse
A thousande fold yet heighere than the sonne;
He is, he kan, that fewe lordes konne,
And Pandarus, of that thei wold afferme,
He naught forgat hire preysynge to conferme.

CCXXVIII.

Herde al this thynge Criseyde wel inough,
And every word gan for to notifie,
For wiche with sobre chere hire herte lough,

For who is that ne wold hire glorifie
To mowen swich a knyght don lyve or dye?
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle,
For o fyn is alle that ever Y telle.

CCXXIX.

The tyme com fro dyner for to rise,
And, as hem aughte, arisen everychon,
And gonne a while of this and that devyse;
But Pandarus brak al this speche anon,
And seyde to Deiphebus, 'Wol ye gone,
If youre wille be, as I yow preyde,
To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?'

CCXXX.

Eleyne, whiche that by the honde hire helde,
Took first the tale, and sayde, 'Go we blyve,'
And goodely on Criseyde she byhelde,
And seyde, 'Joves late hym nevere thryve
That doth yow harm, and brynge hym sone of lyve,
And yeve me sorwe but he schal it rewe,
If that I may, and al*le* folk be trewe.'

CCXXXI.

'Tel thow thi neces cas,' quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus, 'for thow kanst best it telle.'
'My lordes and my ladys, it stant thus;
What shold I longer,' quod he, 'do yow dwelle?'
He rong hem oute a proces like a belle
Upon hire fo, that highte Poliphete,
So heynous, that men myghte on it spete.

CCXXXII.

Answerde of this ech werse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to waryen,
Anhonged be swich oon, were he my brother,—
And so he shal, for it ne may naughte varyen.—
What sholde I longer in this tale taryen?
Pleynlich al atones they hire highten
To ben hire help in al that evere thei myghten.

CCXXXIII.

Spake thanne Eleyne, and seyde, 'Pandarus,
Woot oughte my lorde, my brother, this matere?
I mene Ector; or woot it Troilus?'
He seyde, 'Ye!' but, 'Wole ye now me here?
Me thynketh this, sith Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She told hire-self hym al this er she wente.

CCXXXIV.

'For he wol have the more hire grief at herte,
Bycause, lo, that she a lady is;
And by youre leve, I wol but in right sterte,
And do yow wyte, and that anon iwis,
If that he slepe, or wol ought here of this:'
And yn he lepte, and seyde hym in his ere,
'God have thi soule, ibrought have I thi beere.'

CCXXXV.

To smylen of this tho gon Troilus,
And Pandarus, withouten rekenynge,
Out wente anon to Eleyne and Deiphebus,

And seyde hem, 'So ther be no taryinge
Ne more prees, he wol wele that ye brynge
Criseyda, my lady, that is here,
And as he may enduren, he wol here.

CCXXXVI.

'But wel ye wote, the chaumber is but lyte,
And fewe folk may lightly mak it warm;
Now loketh ye; for I wol have no wyte
To brynge in prees that myghten don *hym* harm,
Or hym disesen, for my bettre arm:
Wher it be bet she bide til eftsones,
Now loketh ye that knowen what to doon is.

CCXXXVII.

'I sey for me, best is as I kan knowe,
That no wyght in ne wente, but ye tweie,
But it were I; for I kan in a throwe
Reherce hire cas, unlike that she kan seye:
And efter this she may hym ones preye
To ben good lord in short, and take hire leve;
This may nought muchel of his ese hym reve.

CCXXXVIII.

And eke for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His ese, which that hym thar nought for yow;
Ek other thynge, that toucheth nought to here,
He wol me telle, I woot it wele right now,
That secrete is, and for the townes prow:'
And they that nothynge knewe of this entente,
Withoute more, *to* Troilus in they wente.

CCXXXIX.

Eleyn, in al hire goodly softe wyse,
Gan hym salue, and wommanly to pleye,
And seyde, 'Iwis, ye most alwayes arise!
Now fayre brother, beth al hool I preye!
And gan hire arm right over his shulder leye,
And hym with al hire wit to reconforte,
As sche best koude, she gan hym to disporte.

CCXL.

So after this quod she, 'We yow biseke,
My deere brother Deiphebus and I,
For love of God, and so doth Pandare eke,
To ben goode lord and frende, right hertely,
Unto Criseyde, which that certeinly
Receyveth wrong, as woot wel here Pandare,
That kan hire cas *wel* bet than I declare.'

CCXLI.

This Pandare gan new his tonge affile,
And al hire cas reherce, and that anon;
When it was seyde, soone after in a while,
Quod Troilus, 'As soon as *I* may gon,
I wol right fayn with al my myght ben on,
Have God my trouth, hire cause to sustene.'
'Goode thrift have ye!' quod Eleyne the quene.

CCXLII.

Quod Pandarus, 'And it youre wille be,
That she may take hire leve or that she go?
Or elles God forbede it,' tho quod he,

'If that she voucheth sauf for to do so:'
And with that worde, quod Troilus, 'Ye two,
Deiphebus, and my suster leef and dere,
To yow have I to speke of a matere,

CCXLIII.

'To ben avysed by youre rede the bettere.'
And fond, as hap was, at his beddes hed
The copie of a tretis, and a lettre
That Ector hadde hym sent to axen red
If swiche a man was worthy to ben dede
Noot I naught who; but in a grysely wyse
He preyed hem anon on it avyse.

CCXLIV.

Deiphebus gan this letre for tonfolde
In ernest gret, so dide Eleyne the quene,
And romynge outward, fast it gonne biholde,
Downward a steyre, into an erber grene:
This ilke thynge thei redden hem bitwene,
And largely the mountaunce of an houre
Thei gonne *on* it to reden and to poure.

CCXLV.

Now lat hem rede, and torne we anon
To Pandarus, that gan ful faste prye
That al was wel; and out he gan to gon
Into the grete chaumber, and that in hye,
And seyde, 'God save al this cumpaignye!
Com nece myn, my lady quene Eleyne,
Abideth yow, and ek my lordes tweyne.

CCXLVI.

'Ris, take with yowe yowre nece Antigone,
Or whom yow lest, or no fors hardily;
The lesse prees the bet, com forth with me,
And loke that ye thonken humblely
Hem alle thre; and when ye may goodely
Youre tyme se, taketh of hem youre leve,
Lest we to longe his restes hym byreve.'

CCXLVII.

Al innocent of Pandarus entente,
Quod tho Criseyde, 'Go we, uncle dere;'
And arm in arm, inward with hym she wente,
Avysed wel hire wordes and hire chere;
And Pandarus, in ernestful manere,
Seyde, 'Alle folk, for Goddes love I preye,
Stynteth right here, and softely *yow pleye*.

CCXLVIII.

'Avyseth yow what folk ben her withinne,
And in what plite oon is, God hym amende!'
And inwarde thus *ful* softely bygynne:—
'Nece, I conjure, and heighly yow defende,
On his half which that *soule* us al sende,
And in the vertu of corones tweyne,
Sle nought this man that hath for yow this peyne.

CCXLIX.

'Fye on the deuel! thynke which oone he is,
And in what plit he lith; com *of* anon,
Thynk alle swich taried tyd but lost it nys;

That wol ye bothe seyne, when ye ben oon:
Secoundly, ther yet devyneth noon
Upon yow two; com of now, if ye konne,
Whil folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is wonne!

CCL.

'In titerynge, and pursuyte, and delayes,
The folk devyne at waggynge of *a* stre,
And though ye wol have aftyr merye dayes,
Than dar ye naught, and why? For she, and she,
Spak swich a word; thus loked he, and he;
Lest tyme I lost, I dar naught with yow dele;
Com of therfor, and bryngeth hym to hele.'

CCLI.

But now to yow, ye lovers that ben here,
Was Troilus naught in a kankerdort,
That lay, and myghte the whisprynge of hem here,
And thought 'O Lord, right now renneth my sort
Fully to deye, or han onon conforte;'
And was the firste tyme he shold hire preye
Of love; O myghty God! what shal he seye?

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS.

I.

O BLISFUL light, of which the bemes clere
Adorneth al the thridde hevene fayre!
O Sonnes lief, O Joves doughter dere!

Plesaunce of love, O godely debonaire,
In gentil hertes ay redy to repayre!
O verray cause of hele and of gladdenesse,
Iheried be thi myght and thy goodenesse.

II.

In Hevene and Helle, and erthe and salt se,
Is felt thi myght, if that I wol discerne;
As man, bryd, best, fissh, herbe, and grene tre,
Thei fele in tymes, with vapour eterne,
God loveth, and to love wol nought werne;
And in this world no lyves creature,
Withouten love is worth, or may endure.

III.

Ye, Joves, first, to thilke effectes glade,
Thorugh which that thynges lyven al and be,
Comeneden, and amoreux hem made
On mortal thynge, and, as yow lyst, ay ye
Yeve hem in love, ese, or adversité;
And in a thousand formes down hym sente
For love in erthe, and *whom* yow list he hente.

IV.

Ye fierse Mars apasen of his ire,
And as yow list ye maken hertes digne;
Algates hem that ye wol sette a fyre,
Thei dreden shame, and vices thei resigne;
Ye don hem curteis be fresshe and benigne,
And heigh or lawe, eftir a wight entendeth,
The joies that he hath youre myght it sendeth.

V.

Ye holden regne and hous in unité;
Ye sothfast cause of frendschipe ben also;
Ye know al thilke covered qualité
Of thynges, which that folk on wondren so;
When thei kan*ne* naught construe how it may go,
She loveth hym, or why he loveth here,
As why this fish, and naught *that*, cometh to were.

VI.

Ye folk a lawe han sette in universe,
And this know I by hem that loveres be,
That who-so stryveth with yow hath the worse:
Now, lady bryghte! for thi benignité,
At reverence of hem that serven the,
Whos clerc I am, so techeth me devyse
Som joie of that is felt in thi servyse.

VII.

Ye, in my nakyd herte sentement
Inhielde, and do me shew of thy swetnesse!
Caliope, thi vois be now presente,
For is now nede; sestow nought my distresse?
How I mot telle anon right the gladnesse
Of Troilus, to Venus heryinge,
To which who nede hath, God hym brynge.

EXPLICIT PROHEMIUM TERTII LIBRI.

INCIPIT LIBER TERTIUS.

I.

AY al this mene-while Troilus
Recordynge his lesson in this manere;
'May fey!' thought he, 'thus wol I seye, and thus;
Thus wol I pleyne unto my lady deere;
That worde is goode, and this shal be my chere;
This nyl I nought foryeten in no wyse;'
God leve hym werken as he gan devyse.

II.

And, lord! so that his herte gan to quappe,
Heryng hire com, and shorte for to sike;
And Pandarus, that ledde hire by the lappe,
Com ner, and gan in at the curtyn pike,
And seyde, 'God do bote on alle sike!
Se who is here yow comen to vysite,
Lo, here is she that is yowre deth to wyte!'

III.

Therwith it semed as he wepte almost,
'Ha! a!' quod Troilus so reufully,
'Wher me be wo, O myghty God, thow wost!
Who is al ther? I se nought trewely.'
'Sire,' quod Criseyde, 'it is Pandare and I;'
'Ye, swete herte? allas, I may nought rise
To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse.'

IV.

And dressed hym upwarde, and she right tho
Gan both hire hondes soft upon hym leye,
'O, for the love of God, do ye nought so
To me,' quod she, 'I! what is this to seye?
Syr comen am I to you for causes tweye,
First yow to thanke, and of yowre lordschipe eke
Continuaunce I wolde yow byseke.'

V.

This Troilus, that herde his lady preye
Of hym lordship, wex neyther quyk ne dede;
Ne myght o worde for shame to it seye,
Although men sholde smyten of his hede;
But, lord! so he wex sodeynlyche rede!
And, sire, his lesson, that he wende konne
To preyen hire, is thorugh his wit yronne.

VI.

Criseyde al this aspied wel ynough,
For she was wis, and loved hym nevere the lasse,
Al ner he malapert, or made it tough,
Or was to bold to synge a fole amasse;
But, when his shame gan somwhat to passe,
His resons, as I may my rymes holde,
I yow wol telle, as techen bokes olde.

VII.

In chaunged vois, right for his verray drede,
Which voys ek quook, and therto his manere
Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,

Now pale, unto Criseyde, his lady deere,
With loke down cast, and humble iyolden chere,
Lo! the alderfirst worde that hym asterte,
Was tweyes, 'Mercy, mercy, swete-herte.'

VIII.

And stynte a while, and when he myght oute brynge,
The nexte worde was, 'God woot for I have,
As faithfully as I have hadde konnyng,
Ben youres alle, so God my soule save,
And shal, tyl that I, woful wight, be grave;
And though I dar, ne kan, unto yow pleyne,
Iwis I suffer naught the lasse peyne.

IX.

'Thus muche as now, O wommanliche wif,
I may oute brynge, and if this yowe displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owen lif
Right soon I trow, and do your herte an ese,
If with my deth youre herte I may apese:
But syn that ye han herd me somwhat seye,
Now reche I nevere how soon that I deye.'

X.

Therwith his manly sorwe to beholde,
It myght han maad an herte of stone to rewe;
And Pandare wep as he to water wolde,
And puked ever his nece new and newe,
And seyde, 'Wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
'For love of God, make of this thyng an ende,
Or sle us both atones, er that ye wende.'

XI.

'I! what!' quod she, 'by God and by my trowthe
I not nat what ye wilne that I seye:'
'I! what!' quod he, 'that ye han on hym rewthe,
For Goddes love, and doth hym nought to deye:'
'Now than thys,' quod she, 'I wolde hym preye,
To telle me the fyn of his entente,
Ye wiste I nevere wel what that he mente.'

XII.

'What that I mene, O swete herte deere?'
Quod Troilus, 'O goodely fressh *and* fre!
That, with the streme of youre eighen clere,
Ye wolde somtyme freshely on me se,
And thanne agreen that I may ben he,
Withouten braunche of vyce, on any wyse,
In trowth alway to don yow my servyse,

XIII.

'As to my lady right, and chief resorte,
With al my wit and al my diligence;
And *I* to han right as yow list conforte,
Under youre yerde egal to myn offence,
As deth, if that I breke youre defence;
And that ye deigne me so muchel honoure,
Me to comaunden aught in any houre.

XIV.

'And I to ben youre veray humble, trewe,
Secret, and in my peynes pacient,
And everemo desiren, freshly newe,

To serven, and ben ay ylike diligent,
And, with goode herte, al holly youre talent
Receyven wel, how soore that me smerte;
Lo this mene I, myn owen swete herte.'

XV.

Quod Pandarus, 'Lo, here an hard requeste,
And resonable, a lady for to warne!
Now nece myn, by Natal Joves feste,
Were I a God, ye sholden sterve as-yerne,
That heren wel this man wol nothyng yerne
But your honoure, and sen hym almost sterve,
And ben so loth to suffre hym yow serve.'

XVI.

With that she gan hire eyen on hym caste
Ful esyly, and ful debonayrly
Avysynge hire, and hyede nought to faste,
With nevere a word, but seyde hym softely,
Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
And in swiche forme as he can now devyse,
Receyven hym fully to my servyse;

XVII.

'Besechynge hym, for Goddes love, that he
Wolden in honour of treuthe and gentilnesse,
As I wel mene, ek menen wele to me:
And myn honour, with wit and bysinesse,
Ay kepe; and, if I may don hym gladdenesse,
From hennesforth iwis I nyl nought feyne:
Now beth al hoole, no longer ye ne pleyne.

XVIII.

'But, natheles, this werne I yow,' quod she,
'A kynges sone al-though ye be iwis,
Ye shul namore han sovereyntè
Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
Ny nyl forbere, if that ye do amys,
To wrethe yow, and whil that ye me serve,
Chericen yow, right efter ye disserve.

XIX.

'And shortly, deere herte and al my knyghte,
Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
And I shal trewely, with al my myght,
Your bittre tornen al into swettenesse;
If I be she that may do yow gladnesse,
For every wo ye shalle recovere a blisse;'
And hym in armes took, and gan hym kysse.

XX.

Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his yen
To hevene threwe, and helde hise hondes highe:
'Immortal God!' quod he, 'that maist nought dyen,
Cupide I mene, of this maist thow glorifye!
And Venus! thow maist maken melodye
Withouten honde, me semeth that in the town,
For this merveille Ich here ich belle sowne.

XXI.

'But ho! namore as now of this matere,
For-whi this folk wol comen up anon,
That han the lettre red; lo, I hem here,

But I conjure the, Crisseyde, and oon
And two, thow, Troilus, whan thow maist gon
That at myn hous ye ben at my warnynge,
For I ful wele shal shape youre comynge.

XXII.

'And eseth there youre hertes right ynough,
And, lat se, which of yow shal bere the belle
To speke of love aright?' and therwith he lough,
'For ther have ye a layser for to telle:'
Quod Troilus, 'How longe shal I dwelle
Er this be don?' Quod he, 'Whan thou maist rise
This thyng shal be right as I yow devyse.'

XXIII.

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward right at the steyres ende;
And, lord! for schame gan gronen Troilus,
His brother and his suster for to blende:
Quod Pandarus, 'It tyme is that we wende;
Tak, nece myn, youre leve at alle thre,
And lat hem spek, and cometh forth with me.'

XXIV.

She toke hire leve at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel koude, and they hire reverence
Unto the fulle diden hardily,
And wonder wel speken in hire absens
Of hire, in preysynge of hire excellence;
Hire governaunce, hire wit, and hire manere
Comendiden *they*, it joie was to here.

XXV.

Now lat hire wende unto hire owen place,
And torne we to Troilus ayeyn,
That gan ful lightly of the letre pace,
That Diephebus hadde in the gardyn seyn;
And of Eleyne and hym Deiphebus he wolde feyne
Delivered ben, and seyde that hym leste
To slepe, and efter tales han *a* reste.

XXVI.

Eleyne hym kyste, and toke hire leve blyve,
Deiphebus ek, and hom wente every wyght;
And Pandarus, as fast as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as lyne right;
And on a pailet, al that glade nyght,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere
To tale, and wel was hym thei were ifere.

XXVII.

When every wight was *voi*ded but thei two,
And alle the dores were faste yschette,
To telle in shorte, withouten wordes mo,
This Pandarus, withouten any lette,
Up roos, and on his beddes syde hym sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse.

XXVIII.

'Myn alderlevest lord, and brother deere,
God woot, and thow, that it satte me so soore
When I the saugh so langwisshynge to-yeer

For love, of which thi wo wax alway more;
That I with al my myght and al my loore,
Have evere sithen *don* my bysinesse
To brynge the to joie oute of distresse.

xxix.

'And have it brought to swiche plit as thow woost,
So that thorugh me thow stondest now in weye
To faren wel, I seye it for no boste;
And wostow why? for, shame it is to seye,
For the have I bigonne a gamen pleye,
Whiche that I nevere do shal eft for othere,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother.

xxx.

That is to seye, for the I am bicomen,
Bytwyxen game and ernest, swich a meene,
As maken wommen unto men to comen;
Al seye I nought, thow wost wel what I mene;
For the have I my nece, of vices clene,
So fully maad thy gentilesce *to* triste,
That al be shal right as thyselven liste.

xxxi.

'But God, that al woote, tak I to wittenesse,
That nevere I this for coveytise iwroughte,
But onely for tabregge that distresse,
For which welneigh thow dydest, as me thoughte:
But, goode brother, do now as the aughte,
For Goddes love, and kepe hyre oute of blame,
Syn thow art wis, and save alwey hire name.

XXXII.

'For wele thow woost, the name as yet of hire
Among the peple, as who seith, halowed is;
For that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
That evere wiste yet that she dide amys;
But wo is me, that I, that cause al this,
May thenken that she is my nece deere,
And I hire em, and traitor ek ifeere!

XXXIII.

'And were it wist that I, thorwh myn *engyn*,
Hadde in my nece yput this fantasye
To don thi luste, and holly to ben thyn,
Why, al the worlde upon it wolde crye,
And seyn, that I the werste trecherye
Dide in this cas, that evere was bygonne,
And she forloste, and thow right nought ywonne.

XXXIV.

'Wherfore, er I wol forther gon a pas,
Yet eft Y the biseche and fully seye,
That pryveté go with us in this caas;
That is to seyn, that thow nevere us wreye;
And be not wroth, though I the ofte preye
To holden secré swich an heigh matere;
For skylful is, thow woost wel, my preyere.

XXXV.

'And thynk what wo ther hath bityd or this
For makynge of avauntes, as men rede;
And what meschaunce in this worlde yet ther is,

Fro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
For which this wise clerkes that ben dede
Han evere this proverbed to us yonge,
That firste vertu is to kepe tonge.

XXXVI.

'And, ner it that I wilne as now tabregge
Diffusion of speche, I koude almoost
A thousand olde stories the alegge
Of wommen lost thorugh fals and fooles bost;
Proverbes kanst thi-self inow, and woost,
Ayeyns that vice, *as* for to ben a labbe,
Al seyde men soth as often as they gabbe.

XXXVII.

'O tong, allas! so often here biforne
Hastow made many a lady bright of hewe,
Seyd 'Waylawey, the day that I was born!'
And many a maydes sorwes for to newe;
And, for the more part, al is untrewe
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve;
Of kynde non avauntour is to leve.

XXXVIII.

'Avauntour and a lyer, al is oone;
As thus:—I pose a womman graunte me
Hire love, and seith that other wol she noon,
And I am sworn to holden it secree,
And efter I go telle it two or thre;
Iwis I am avauntour, at the leeste,
And *a* lyer, for I breke my byheste.

XXXIX.

'Now loke than if they be nought to blame,—
Swich manere folk, what shal I clepe hem? what?—
That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name,
That yet biheighte hem never this ne that,
Ne knew hem more than myn olde hatte?
No wonder is, so God me sende hele,
Though wommen dreden with us men to deele.

XL.

'I seye nought this for no mystruste of yowe,
Ne for no wyse men, but for foles nyce;
And for the harme that in the world is now,
For wel for folye oft as for malice;
For wel woot I, in wyse folk, that vice
No womman drat, if she be wel avised,
For wise ben by foles harm chastised.

XLI.

'But now to purpos:—leeve brother deere,
Have al this thyng that I have seyde in mynde,
And kepe the clos, and be now of goode chere,
For at thi day thow shalt me trewe fynde;
I shal thi processe sette in swiche a kynde,
And God toforn, that it shal the suffise,
For it shal ben right as thow wolt devyse.

XLII.

'For wel I woot, thow menest wel, pardé!
Therfor I dar this fully undertake;
Thow woost ek what thy lady graunted the,

And day is set the chartres up to make;
Have now goode nyght, I may no longer wake,
And bid for me, syn thow ert now in blisse,
That God me sende dethe or soone lysse.'

XLIII.

Who myghte tellen half the joye or the feest
Whiche that the soule of Troilus tho felte,
Herynge theffecte of Pandarus biheste?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Gan tho for joye *to* wasten, and to melte,
And al the richesse of his sikes soore,—
Atones fledde, he felte of hem namore.

XLIV.

But right so as this holtes and this hayis
That han in wynter dede ben and drye,
Revesten hem in greene, when that May is,
When every lusty lyketh best to pleye;
Ryghte in that selve wyse, soth for to seye,
Wax sodeynliche his herte ful of joie,
That gladdere was ther never man in Troye.

XLV.

And gan his looke on Pandarus up caste
Ful sobrely, and frendly for to se,
And seyde, 'Frend, in April the laste,
As wel thow woost, if it remembre the,
How neigh the deth for wo thow founde me,
And how thow didest al thi besynesse
To know of me the cause of my distresse.

XLVI.

'Thow woost how longe Ich *it* forbare to seye
To the, that ert the man that I best triste,
And peril non was it to the biwreye,
That wiste I wele; but telle me, if the liste,
Sith I so loth was that thi-self it wiste,
How dorst I mo tellen of this matere,
That quake now, and no wight may us here?

XLVII.

'But natheles, by that God I the sweere,
That, as hym list, may al this world governe;
And if I lye, Achilles with his speere
Myn herte cleve, al were my lyfe eterne,
As I am mortal, if I, late or yerne,
Wold it biwreye, or dorst, or sholde, or konne,
For alle the goode that God made under sonne.

XLVIII.

'That rather deye I wolde, and determyne,
As thynketh me, now stokked in prisone,
In wrechednesse, in filthe, and *in* vermyne,
Caytif to cruel kynge Agamemnoun;
And this in alle the temples of this town,
Upon the Goddes alle, I wil the swere
To morwe day, if that it lyketh the here.

XLIX.

'And that thow hast so much ido for me,
That I ne may it nevere more disserve,
This knowe I wel, al myghte I now for the

A thousand tymes on a morwen sterve.
I kan namore, but that I wol the serve
Right as thi sclave, whider so thow wende,
For evere more, unto my lyves ende.

L.

'But here, with al myn herte, I the biseche
That nevere in me thow deme swiche folye
As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche,
That this whiche thow me doste for companye,
I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
I am nought wode, alle-if I lewed be;
It is nought so, that woot I wel, pardé!

LI.

'But he that goth for gold, or for richesse,
On swich message, cal him what the liste;
And this that thow dost, calle it gentilnesse,
Compassyon, and felawschyp, and truste;
Departe it so, for wide-where is wiste
How that ther is dyversité requered,
Bytwexen thynges lyke, as I have lered.

LII.

'And that thow knowe I thynke nought ne wene,
That this servyse a shame be or *a* jape,
I have my faire suster Polixene,
Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
Be she nevere so faire, or wel ishape,
Tel which thow wilt of everychon
To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.

LIII.

'But sith thou thow hast don me this servyse,
My lif to save, and for non hope of mede;
So, for the love of God, this grete emprise
Parforme it out, for now is moste nede;
For heigh and lough, withouten any drede,
I wol alway thine hestis alle kepe.
Have now gode nyght, and lat us bothe slepe.'

LIV.

Thus held hem ich of other wel apayed,
That al the world ne myghte it bet amende;
And on the morwen, when they were arayed,
Ech to his owen nedes gan entende:
But Troilus, though as the fire he brende
For sharpe desire of hope and of plesaunce,
He nought forgat his goode governaunce.

LV.

But in hymself with manhode gan restreyne
Ech rackle dede, and ech unbrideled chere,
That alle tho that lyven, soth to seyne,
Ne sholde han wiste, by word or by manere,
What that he mente, as touchynge this matere;
From every wyght as fer as is the cloude
He was, so wele dissimulen he koude.

LVI.

And al the while which that I yow devyse,
This was his lyf; with al his fulle myghte,
By day he was in Martes heighe servyse,

This is to seyn, in armes as a knyghte,
And for the more part, the longe nyght,
He lay, and thought how that he myghte serve
His lady best, hire thonke for to deserve.

LVII.

Nyl I nought swere, although he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas somwhat disesed,
Ne that he torned on his pilous ofte,
And wald of that he myssed han ben sesed;
But in swich cas men is nought alwey plesed,
For ought I woot, namore than was he;
That kan I deme of possibilité.

LVIII.

But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this while, as writen is in geste,
He say his lady somtyme; and also
She with hym spake when that she dorst and liste;
And, by hire bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warly in this nede,
So as they dorst, how they wolden procede.

LIX.

But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich awayt alwey, and in swich fere,
Lest any wight devynen, or devyse
Wold of hem two, or to it ley an ere,
That al this world so leve to hem ne were,
As that Cupide wold hem grace sende
To maken of hire speche aright an ende.

LX.

But thilke litel that they spake or wroughte,
His wise goost took ay of al swich hede,
It semed hire he weste what she thoughte,
Withouten word, so that it was no nede
To bid hym ought to don, or ought forbede;
For which she thoughte that love, al come it late,
Of alle joie hadde opened hire the yate.

LXI.

And shortly of this proces for to pace,—
So wel his werk, and wordes he bisette,
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenti thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thanked God that evere she with hym mette,
So koude he hym governe in swich servyse,
That al the world ne myght it bet avyse.

LXII.

For-why she fonde hym so discrete in al,
So secrete, and of swich obeysaunce,
That wel she felte he was to hire a wal
Of stiel, and shield from every displesaunce;
That to be in his goode governaunce,
So wis he was, she was namore afered,
I mene as fér as oughte ben requered.

LXIII.

And Pandarus, to quyke alwey the fire,
Was evere yholde prest and diligent;
To ese his frende was sette al his desire.

He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent,
He lettres bar whan Troilus was asente;
That nevere man, as in his frendes nede,
Ne ber hym bet thanne he, withouten drede.

LXIV.

But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
That every worde, or sond, or looke, or chere
Of Troilus, that I rehercen sholde,
In al this while, unto his lady deere;
I trowe it were a longe thynge for to here;
Or of what wight that stant in swich disjoynte
His wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.

XLV.

Forsoth I have naught herd it don er this
In storie non, ne no man here I weene;
And though I wolde, I koude nought, iwis;
For ther was som epistel hem bytwene,
That walde, as seith myn auctour, wele contene
Neigh half this boke, of which hym liste nought wryte;
How shold I thanne a lyne of it endite?

LXVI.

But to the grete effect:—thanne sey I thus,
That stondyng in concord and in quiete
This ilke twey, Cryseyde and Troilus,
As I have tolde, and in this tyme swete,
Save only often myghte they not mete,
Ne layser have, hire speches to fulfille,
That it befel right as I shal yow telle;

LXVII.

That Pandarus, that evere dide his myght,
Right for the fyn that I shal spek of here,
As for to bryngen to his hous som nyghte
His faire nece, and Troilus yfere,
Wher as at layser al this he*igh* matere,
Touchynge hire love wer at the fulle up-bounde,
Hadde oute of doute a tyme to it founde.

LXVIII.

For he, with grete deliberacioun,
Hadde every thynge that hereto myght availle
Forncast, and put in execucioun,
And noither left for cost ne for travaile;
Come if hem lest, hym sholde no thynge faille,
And for to ben in oughte aspied thare,
That wiste he wel an impossible were.

LXIX.

Dredeles it clere was in the wynde
Of every pie, and every lette game;
Now alle is wel, for al the world is blynde
In this matere, bothe fremed and tame;
This tymbyr is al redy up to frame;
Us lakketh nought, but that we witen wolde
A certein oure, in whiche she comen sholde.

LXX.

And Troilus, that al this purveiaunce
Knew at the fulle, and waited on it ay,
Hadde hereupon ek made grete ordinaunce,

And fonde his cause, and therto his aray,
That if that he were myssed nyght or day,
The while he was abouten this servyse,
That he was gon to don his sacrifise,

LXXI.

And moste at swhich a temple allone wake,
Answerde of Apollo for to be,
And first to sen the holy laurer quake,
Er that Apollo spake oute of the tre,
To telle hym next when that the Greekes sholde fle;
And forthi lette hym no man, God forbede!
But preye Apollo helpen in this nede.

LXXII.

Now is ther litel more for to doone,
But Pandare up, and shortily for to seyne,
Right soone upon the chaungynge of the moone,
Whan lightlees is the world, a nyght or tweyne,
And that the walken shope hym for to reyne,
He streight o morwe unto his nece wente;
Ye han wel herde, the fyn of his entente.

LXXIII.

Whan he was come, he gan anon to pleye,
As he was wont, and of hymself to jape;
And finally he swore, and gan hire seye,
Bi this and that, she shold hym nought escape,
Ne lenger don hym efter hire to *g*ape;
But certeinly, she moste, by hire leve,
Come soupen in his hous with hym at eve.

LXXIV.

At which she lough, and gan hire faste excuse,
And seyde: 'It reyneth, lo! how shold I gon?'
'Lat be,' quod he, 'ne stand nought thus to muse,
This mot be done, ye shal be ther onon.'
So, at the last, hereof they fel attone,
Or elles soft he swor hire in hire ere,
He nolde nevere comen ther she were.

LXXV.

Soone after this, she to hym gan to rowne,
And axed hym if Troilus wer there;
He swor hire nay, for he was oute of town,
And seyde, 'Nece I pose that he were,
Thow thruste nevere han the more fere;
For rather than men myght hym ther aspie,
Me were lever a thousand folde *to* deye.'

LXXVI.

Nought list myn auctour fully to declare,
What that she thought*e* when he seide so,
That Troilus was oute of town ifare,
As if he seyde therof soth or no;
But that, with*out* awayt, with hym to go,
She graunted hym, sith he hire that bisoughte,
And, as his nece, obeyed as hire oughte.

LXXVII.

But natheles, yett gan she hym biseche,
Al though with hym to gon it was no fere,
For to be war of goofish peples speche,

That dremen thynges which as never were:
And wel avyse hym whom he broughte there,
And seyde hym, 'Em, syn I most on yow triste,
Look al be wel; *I* do now as yow liste.'

LXXVIII.

He swor hire yis! by stokkes and by stones,
And by the Goddes that in Hevene dwelle,
Or elles were hym levere, soule and bones,
With Pluto kynge as depe ben in Helle
As Tantalus: what shold I more telle?
When alle was wel he roos and tooke his leve,
And she to soper come when it was eve,

LXXIX.

With a certeyn of hire owne men,
And with hire faire nece Antigone,
And other of hire wommen nyne or ten.
But who was glade? now who, as trowe ye,
But Troilus, that stood and myght it se
Thorugh out a litel wyndowe in a stewe,
Ther he bishet, sen mydnyght, was in muwe,

LXXX.

Unwist of every wyght, but of Pandare.
But to the pointe:—now when she was icome,
With alle joie, and alle frendes fare,
Hire em anon in armes hath hire nome,
And efter to the soper alle and some,
When tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;
God woot ther was no deynté for to fette.

LXXXI.

And after soper gonnen they to ryse,
At ese wele, with herte fresshe and glade,
And wel was hym that koude beste devyse
To liken hire, or that hire laughen made;
He song, she pleyde, he tolde tale of Wade:
But at the last, as every thynge hath ende,
She tooke hire leve, and nedes walde wende.

LXXXII.

But O Fortune, executrice of wierdes!
O influences of this hevenes hye!
Soth is, that, under God, ye ben oure hierdes,
Though to us bestes ben the causes wrye:
This mene I now for she gan homward hye;
But execut was, al byside hire leve,
At the goddes wil, for which she moste bleve.

LXXXIII.

The bente moone with hire hornes pale,
Saturne and Jove in Cancro joyned were,
That swich a reyne from Hevene gan avale,
That every manere woman that was there,
Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere;
At which Pandare tho lough, and seyde thenne,
'Now were it tyme a lady to gette henne!

LXXXIV.

'But, goode nece, if I myght evere plese
Yow any thynge, than preye Ich yow,' quod he,
'To don myn herte as now so grete an ese,

As for to dwelle here al this nyght with me;
For-whi this is youre owene hous, pardé!
Now, by my trowth, I sey it nought a game,
To wonde as now, it were to me a shame.'

LXXXV.

Criseyde, which that *coude* as muche good
As half a world, took hede of his preyere;
And syn it ron, and alle was on a flode,
She thought, 'As good chep may I dwelle here,
And graunte it gladly with a frendes chere,
And have a thank, as gruche and thanne abide,
For hom to gon it may nought wele bitide.

LXXXVI.

'I wol,' quod she, 'myn uncle lief and dere,
Syn that yow list, it skyl is to be so;
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here,
I seyde but a game I wolde go.'
'Iwis, graunte mercy, nece!' quod he tho;
'Were it a game or no, soth for to telle,
Now I am glad, syn that yow list to dwelle.'

LXXXVII.

Thus al is wele; but tho bigan aright
The newe joie, and al the fest agayne;
But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he myght,
He wold han hyed hire to bedde fayne,
And seyde, 'Lord! this is an huge reyne!
This were a weder for to slepen inne
And that I rede us soon bigynne.

LXXXVIII.

'And nece, woote ye where I wol yow leye,
For that we shullen not liggen fer a sonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,
Heren noise of reynes, nor of thonder;
By God, right in my lite closet yonder;
And I wol in that outter hous allone,
Be warden of youre wommen everychon.

LXXXIX.

'And in this myddel chaumber that ye se,
Shal youre wommen slepen wel and softe;
And ther I seyde shal youre-selven be;
And if ye liggen wel to nyght, come ofte,
And careth nought what weder is alofte.
The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,
Go we *to* slepe, I trow it be the beste.'

XC.

Ther nys no more, but here efter soone
Thei voide, dronke, and traveres drawe anon;
Gan every wyghte that hadde nought to done
More in the place, oute of the chaumber gone;
And everemore so sternelich it ron,
And blew therwith so wonderliche loude,
That wel neighe no man heren other koude.'

XCI.

Tho Pandarus, hire em, right as hym oughte,
With wommen, swiche as were hire most aboute,
Ful glad unto hire beddes syde hire broughte;

And took his leve, and gan ful lowe loute,
And seyde, 'Here at this closet dore withoute,
Right overthwart, youre wommen liggen alle,
That whom yow list of hem, ye may here calle.

XCII.

Lo when that she was in the closet layde,
And alle hire wommen forth by ordinaunce
Abedde weren, ther as I have seyde,
There was namore to skipen ne to traunce,
But boden go to bedde, with mischaunce!
If any wight was sterynge any where,
And lat hem slepen, that abedde ware.

XCIII.

But Pandarus, that wel koude ech a deele
The olde daunce, and every poynt therinne,
When that he seye that alle thynge was wele,
He thought he wolde upon his werk bygynne;
And gan the stewe dore al soft unpynne,
As stille as stone; withouten langer lette,
By Troilus adown right he hym sette.

XCIV.

And shortly to the pointe right for to gon:—
Of alle this werk he told hym worde and ende,
And seyde, 'Make the redy right anon,
For thow shalt into Hevene blisse wende.'
'Now, blisful Venus! thow me grace sende,'
Quod Troilus, 'for nevere yet no nede,
Hadde Ich er now, ne halvendeel the drede.'

XCV.

Quod Pandarus, 'Ne drede the nevere a dele,
For it shal be right as thow wolt desire;
So thryve I, this nyght shal I make it wele,
Or casten al the gruwel in the fyre.'
'Now blisful Venus! this nyght thow me enspire,'
Quod Troilus, 'as wys as I the serve,
And evere bet and bet shal til I sterve.

XCVI.

'An if Ich hadde, O Venus ful of myrthe!
Aspectes badde of Mars, or of Saturne,
Or thow combust, or let were in my byrth,
Thi fader prey al thylke harme desturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne,
For love of hym thow lovedest in the shawe,
I mene Adon, that with the bore was slawe.

XCVII.

'O Jove! ek for the love of fayre Europe,
The which in forme of bool awey thow fette:
Now help, O Mars, thow with thi blody cope,
For the love of Cyp*h*es, thow me nought ne lette!
O Phebus! thynke when Dane hire-selven shette
Under the bark and laurer wax for-drede,
Yet for hire love, O help now at this nede!

XCVIII.

'Mercure! for the love of Hierse eke,
For whiche Pallas was with Aglowros wroth,
Now help! and ek Diane! I the biseke,

That this viage be nought to the loth:
O fatal sustren! which, er any cloth
Me shapen was, my desteyné me sponne,
So helpeth to this werk that is bygonne!'

XCIX.

Quod Pandarus, 'Thow wriched mowses herte!
Artow agast so that she wil the byte?
Why, don this furred cloke upon thi sherte,
And folowe me, for I wol han the wyte;
But bid, and lat me gon byforne a lyte;'
And with that word he gan undon a trappe,
And Troilus he brought in by the lappe.

C.

The sterne wynde so loude kan to route
That no wight other noise myght here;
And they that layen at the dore withoute,
Ful sikirly they slepten al ifeere:
And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon, withouten lette,
Ther as they laye, and softely it shette.

CI.

And, as he come ayeynward pryvely,
His nece awoke, and axed, 'Who goth there?'
'My dere nece,' quod he, 'it am I,
Ne wondereth nought, ne have of it no fere;'
And nere he com, and seyde hire in hire ere:—
'No word, for love of God I yow biseche,
Lat no wight rise and heren of oure speche.'

CII.

'What? whiche way be ye comen? benedicite!'
Quod she, 'and how unwiste of hem alle?'
'Here at this secré trappe dore,' quod he;
Quod *tho* Criseyde, 'Lat me som wight calle:'
'I! God forbede that it sholde falle,'
Quod Pandarus, 'that ye swich foly wroughte!
They myghte demen thynge they nevere er thoughte.

CIII.

'It is nought goode a slepyng hounde to wake,
Ne yeve a wyght a cause to devyne;
Youre wommen slepen alle, I undertake,
So that *for* hem the hous men myghte myne,
And slepen wollen til the sonne shyne;
And when my tale brought is to an ende,
Unwyst, right as I com, so wol I wende.

CIV.

'Now, nece myn, ye shal wel understonde,'
Quod he, 'so *as* ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And hym hire 'lief' and 'dere herte' calle,
And maken hym a howve above a calle,—
I mene, as love another in this mene while,—
She doth hire-self a shame, and hym a gyle.

CV.

'Now wherby that I telle yow al this?
Ye wot youre-self as wel as any wyghte,
How that youre love alle fully graunted is

To Troilus, the worthieste knyghte,
Oon of this world, and therto trouthe iplighte,
That, but it were on hym alonge, ye nolde
Hym nevere falsen while ye lyven sholde.

CVI.

'Now stant it thus, that, sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thorwgh a goter, by a pryvé wente,
Into my chaumber com in al this reyn;
Unwist of every manere wight, certeyn,
Save of myself, as wisly have I joye,
And by the feith I shal Priam of Troye!

CVII.

'And he is come in swich wo and distresse,
That, but he be alle fully woode by this,
He sodeynly mot falle into wodenesse,
But-*if* God help: and cause whi is this?
He seith hym tolde is of a frende of his,
How that ye sholden loven oon, hatte Horaste,
For sorwe of whiche this nyght shal ben his laste.'

CVIII.

Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hire herte colde,
And with a sik ful sorwfully answerde:—
'Allas! I wende, who-so tales tolde,
My deere herte wolde me nought holde
So lightly fals: allas! conseytes wronge,
What harme they don, for now lyve I to longe!

CIX.

Horaste? allas! and falsen Troilus?
I knowe hym nought, God helpe me so! quod she.
'Allas! what wikked spirit tolde hym thus?
Now certes, em, to morw, and I hym se,
I shal therof as full excusen me,
As evere dide womman, if hym lyke;'
And with that worde she gan ful sore sike.

CX.

'O God!' quod she, 'so worldly selynesse,
Which clerkes callen fals felicité,
Imedled is with many a bitternesse!
Ful angwyshous than is, God woote,' quod she,
'Condicion of veyn prosperité!
For oyther joies comen nought yfeere,
Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.

CXI.

'O, brotel wele of mannes joie unstable!
With what wight so thow be, or how thow pleye,
Oither he woot that thow joie art muable,
Or woot it nought, it mot ben on of tweyen:
Now if he woot *it not*, how may he seyen
That he hath veray joie and selynesse,
That is of ignoraunce ay in distresse?

CXII.

'Now if he woote that joie is transitorie,
As every joie *of* worldly thynge mot fle,
Thanne every tyme he that hath in memorie,

The drede of lesyng maketh hym that he
May *in* no parfyte selynesse be:
And if to lese his joie, he sette *not* a myte,
Than semeth it, that joie is worth ful lite.

CXIII.

'Wherfor I wol devyne in this matere,
That trewely, for aught I kan espie,
There is no veray wele in this world here.
But, O thow wikked serpent Jalousie!
Thow mysbileved, and envyous folye,
Why hastow made Troilus to me untruste,
That nevere yet agylte hym, that I wyste?'

CXIV.

Quod Pandarus, 'Thus fallen is this cas.'
'Why! uncle myn,' quod she, 'who tolde hym this?
Why doth my deere herte thus, allas?'
'Ye woote, ye nece myn,' quod he, 'what is;
I hope alle shal be wel, that is amys,
For ye may quenche alle this, if that yow liste,
And doth right so, for I hold it for the beste.'

CXV.

'So shal I do to morw, iwis,' quod she,
'And, God toforn, so that it shal suffise;'
'To morwe? allas, that were a fair!' quod he.
'Nay, nay! it may nought stonden in this wyse:
For nece myn, thus writen clerkes wyse,
That peril is with drecchynge in ydrawe;
Nay swich abodes ben nought worth an hawe.

CXVI.

'Nece, alle thynge hath tyme, I dar avowe;
For when a chaumbere afire is, or an halle,
Wel more *nede* is it sod*en*ly rescowe,
Than to disputen and axe amonges alle,
How is this candele in the strow ifalle?
A! benedicite! for al amonge that fare,
The harme is don, and farewel feldefare.

CXVII.

'And, nece, myne, ne take *it* nought a grief;
If that ye suffre hym alle nyght in this wo,
God help me so, ye hadde hym nevere lief,
That dar I seyn, now ther is but we two;
But wel I woot that ye wol nat do so;
Ye ben to wis to don so grete folye,
To put his lif alle nyght in jupartye.'

CXVIII.

'Hadde I hym nevere lief? By God! I wene,
Yet hadde I nevere thynge so lief!' quod she.
'Now, bi my thrifte!' quod he, 'that shal be seene;
For, syn ye make this ensaumple of me,
If Ich alle nyght wold hym in sorw se,
For alle the tresour in the town of Troye,
I bidde God, I nevere mote have joye!

CXIX.

'Now loke thanne if ye, *that* ben his love,
Shul putte his lif alle nyght in jupartye,
For thynge of nought? Now, by that God above!

Nought oonly this delay comth of folye,
But of malice, if that I shal not lye:
What! platly, and ye suffre hym in distresse,
Ye noither bounté don ne gentilnesse.'

CXX.

Quod she Cryseyde, 'Wile ye don o thynge,
And ye therwith shal stynte alle his disese?
Have here and bereth hym this blewe rynge,
For ther is nothynge myght hym better plese,
Save I my-self, ne more his herte apese;
And sey my dere herte that his sorwe
Is causeles, that shal be sene to morwe.'

CXXI.

'A rynge?' quod he, 'ye hasel wodes shaken!
Ye, nece myne, that ryng most han a stoone,
That myghte dede men alyve maken;
And swich a rynge, trow I, that ye have noon:
Discrecion oute of youre hede is gon,
That fele I now,' quod he, 'and that is routhe;
O, tymo ilost! wel maystow corsen slouthe!

CXXII.

'Woot ye not wele that noble and heigh corage
Ne sorweth nought, ne stynteth ek for lite?
But-if a foole were in a jalous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorw a myte,
But feffe hym with a fewe wordes whyte,
Another day, when that I myght hym fynde;
But this thynge stant al in another kynde.

CXXIII.

'This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deth he wol his sorwes wreke;
For, trusteth wel, how sore that hym smert,
He wol to yowe no jalous wordes speke;
And forthy nece, er that his herte breke,
So spek youre-self to hym *of* this matere;
For with a worde ye may his herte steere.

CXXIV.

'Now have I told what peril he is inne,
And his comynge unwiste is tevery wight,
Ne, pardé, harme may ther be non, ne synne;
I wol my-self be with yow al this nyghte;
Ye know ek how it is youre owene knyght,
And that, by right, ye most upon hym triste,
And I *am* prist to fette hym when yow liste.'

CXXV.

This accident so pitous was to here,
And ek so like a soth, at pryme face,
And Troilus hire knyght, to hire so dere,
His privé comyng, and the seker place,
That though that she dide hym as thanne a grace,
Considered alle thynges as they stode,
No wonder is, syn she dide alle for goode.

CXXVI.

Criseyde answerede, 'As wysly God at reste
My soule brynge, as me is for hym wo!
And, em, iwis, fayne wold I don the beste,
If that Ich grace had*de* for to do so;

But, whether that ye dwel, or for hym go,
I am, til God me bettere mynde sende,
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.'

CXXVII.

Quod Pandarus, 'Ye, nece, wil ye here?
Dulcarnon called is 'flemynge of wriches;'
It semeth hard, for wreches wol nought lere,
For veray slouthe, or other wilful tecches;
This seyde is bi hem that ben nought worth two fecches;
But ye ben wis, and that we han in honde
Is neither harde ne skylful to withstonde.'

CXXVIII.

'Thanne, em,' quod she, 'doth hereof as yow liste,
But, or he come, I wol up firste arise;
And, for the love of God, syn al my triste
Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wise,
So werketh now, in so discrete a wyse,
That I honour may have and he plesaunce,
For I am here alle in youre governaunce.'

CXXIX.

'This is wel seyde,' quod he, 'my nece deere!
Ther good thrift on that wise gentil herte!
But liggeth stille, and taketh hym right here,
It nedeth nought no ferther for him sterte;
And ech of yow eseth otheres sorwes smerte,
For love of God! and, Venus! I the herye,
For soon hope I we shul ben al merye.'

CXXX.

This Troylus ful soone on knowes hym sette,
Ful sobrely, right by hire beddes hede,
And in his beste wyse his lady grette:
But, lord! what she wex sodeynlyche rede!
Ne, though men sholde smyten of hire hede,
She koude nought *o* word a-right out brynge,
So sodeynly for his sodeyn comynge.

CXXXI.

But Pandarus, that so wel koude feele
In every thynge, to pleye anon byganne,
And seyde, 'Nece, se how this lord *can* knele!
Now, for youre trouthe, se this gentil man!'
And with that worde, he for a quysshen ran,
And seyde, 'Kneleth now whil that yow liste,
Ther God youre hertes brynge soone at reste!'

CXXXII.

Kan I nought seyn, for she bad hym nought rise,
If sorw it putte oute of hire remembraunce;
Or elles that she toke it in the wyse
Of dweté, as for his observaunce;
But wel fynde I, she did hym this plesaunce,
That she hym kyste, although she sikede soore,
And bad him sitte adown withouten more.

CXXXIII.

Quod Pandarus, 'Now wol ye wel bygynne,
Now doth hym sitte, goode nece deere,
Upon youre beddes syde, al ther withinne,

That ech of yow the bette may other here;'
And with that word he drew hym to the fere,
And took a light, and fonde his contenaunce,
As for to looke upon an old romaunce.

CXXXIV.

Criseyde, that was Troilus lady righte,
And clere stoode on a grounde of sikernesse,
Al though that he, hire servaunt and hire knyghte,
Ne shold of right non untrouth in hire gesse;
Yet natheles, considered his distresse,
And that love is in cause of swich foly,
Thus to hym spake she of his jalousye.

CXXXV.

'Lo, herte myne! as wolde the excellence
Of love, ayenis the whiche that no man may,
Ne aught ek, goodly maken resistence;
And ek bycause I felte wel and say,
Youre grete trouthe, and servyse every day;
And that youre herte al myn was, soth to seyne,
This drofe me for to rew upon youre peyne.

CXXXVI.

'And youre goodenesse have I founden alway yet,
Of which, my dere herte, and al my knyght!
I thonke it yow, as fer as I have witte,
Al kan I nought as much as it were right;
And I, emforth my konnynge and my myght,
Have, and ay shal, how soore that me smerte,
Ben to yow trew and hool with al my herte.

CXXXVII.

'And, dredeles, that shal ben founde at preve;
But, herte myne, what al this is to seyne
Shal wel be tolde, so that ye nought yow greve,
Though I to yow right on your-self compleyne,
For there-with mene I fynaly the peyne,
That halt youre herte and myn in hevynesse,
Fully to slen, and every wronge redresse.

CXXXVIII.

'My goode myn! not I for why ne how
That jalousye, allas! that wikked wyvere,
Thus causeles is cropen into yow,
The harm of which I wolde fayn delivere:
Allas! that he al hool, or of hym slyvere,
Shold han his refut in so digne a place!
Ther Jove hym soone oute of youre herte arace!

CXXXIX.

'But, O thow Jove! O auctour of nature!
Is this an honour unto thy deyté,
That folk ungiltif suffren hire injuré,
And who that giltif is, al quyte goth he?
O, were it leful for to pleyn on the,
That undeserved suffrest jalousye,
Of that I wolde upon the pleyne and crye.

CXL.

'Ek al my wo is this, that folk now usen
To seyn right thus, ye jalousye is love;
And wold a busshel venym al excusen,

For that o greyn of love is on it shove;
But that woot heigh God that is above,
If it be liker love, or hate, or grame,
And efter that it oughte bere his name.

CXLI.

'But certeyn is, som manere jalousye
Is excusable, more thanne som, iwis;
As when cause is, and som swich fantasie
With pieté so wele repressed is,
That it unnethe doth or seyth amys,
But goodly drynketh up al his distresse;
And that excuse I for the gentilesse.

CXLII.

'And som so ful of furie is, and despite,
That it surmounteth his repression.
But, herte myn, ye be not in that plite,
That thonke I God! for which your passioun,
I wol nought calle it but illusioun
Of abundaunce of love, and bisy cure,
That doth youre herte this disese endure.

CXLIII.

'Of which I am right sory, but nought wroth;
But for my devoure and youre hertes reste,
Where so yow list, by ordal or by ooth,
By sort, or in what wyse so yow leste,
For love of God, lat preve it for the beste;
And if that *I* be gilty, do me deye;
Allas! what myght I more don or seyne.'

CXLIV.

With that a fewe brighte teres newe
Oute of her eighen fille, and thus she seyde:—
'Now, God thow woost, in thought ne dede untrewe
To Troilus was nevere yet Criseyde!'
With that hire hed down in the bed she layde,
And with the shete it wreigh, and sighte soore,
And held hire pees, nought a word spak she more.

CXLV.

But now helpe, God, to quenchen al this sorwe!
So hope *I* that he shal, for he best may;
For I have seyn of a ful mysty morwe,
Follwen ful oft a merye someres day;
And efter wynter folweth grene May;
Men sen al day, and reden ek in storyes,
That efter sharpe stoures ben oft victories.'

CXLVI.

This Troilus, when he hire wordes herde,
Have ye no care, hym liste nought to slepe!
For it thought hym no strokes of a yerde
To here or sen Criseyde his lady wepe;
But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe,
For every tere which that Criseyde asterte,
The craumpe of deth, to streyne hym by the herte.

CXLVII.

And in his mynde he gan the tyme acorse
That he com ther, and that he was iborn;
For now is wikked torned into worse,

And al that labour he hath don biforne,
He wende it lost, he thought it nas but lorne.
'O Pandarus,' thought he, 'allas! thi wile,
Serveth of nought, so walawey the while!'

CXLVIII.

And therwithal he henge adown the hede,
And felle on knesse, and sorwfully he sighte;
What myght he seyn? he felt he was but dede,
For wroth was she that shold his sorwes lighte:
But, natheles, when that he speken myghte,
Than seyde he thus, 'God woot, that of this game,
When al is wiste, than am I nought to blame.'

CXLIX.

Therwith the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from hise eyen fel thar nought a tere;
And every spirit his vigour inknette,
So they astoned and oppressed were:
The felynge of his sorwe, or of his feere,
Or of aught elles, fled were out of towne,
And down he fel al sodeynly in swoune.

CL.

This was no litel sorwe for to se,
For al was hust; and Pandare up as faste,
'O nece! pees, or we be lost!' quod he;
'Beth nought agast!' but certeyn at the laste,
For this or that, he into bed hym caste,
And seyde, 'O thef! is this a mannes herte?'
And of he rente alto his bare shirte.

CLI.

And seyde 'Nece, but ye help us now,
Allas! youre owene Troylus is lorne!'
'Iwis so wold I, and I wiste how,
Ful fayn;' quod she, 'allas! that I was borne!'
'Ye, nece? wille ye pulle oute the thorne
That stikketh in his herte?' quod Pandare;
'Sey, 'al foryeven, and stynte *is* al this fare.'

CLII.

'Ye! that to me,' quod she, 'ful levere were
Thanne al the good the sonne aboute goth!'
And therwithal she swor hym in his ere,
'Iwis, my deere herte, I am nought wroth,
Have here my trouthe, and many another ath!
Now spek to me, for it am I Criseyde!'
But al for nought, yet myght he nought abrayde.

CLIII.

Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes
Thei gan to froote, and wete his temples tweyne,
And to delyver him from bittre bondes,
She oft hym kyste; and, shortly for to seyne,
Hym to revoken she did al hire peyne:
And, at the laste, he gan his breth to drawe,
And of his swough sone eftir that *a*dawe;

CLIV.

And gan bet mynde and reson to hym take;
But wonder soore he was *a*baiste, iwis!
And with a syke, when he gan *bet* awake,

He seyde, 'O mercy God! what thynge is this?'
'Whi do *ye* with youre-selven thus amys?'
Quod she Criseyde, 'is this a mannes game?
What Troilus, wol ye do thus, for schame!'

CLV.

And therwithal hire arm overe hym she layde,
And al foryaf, and ofte tyme hym kyssede.
He thonked hire, and to hire spak, and seyde
As fil to purpos, for his herte reste;
And she to that answerde hym as hire leste,
And with hire goodly wordes hym disporte
She gan, and oft his sorwes to conforte.

CLVI.

Quod Pandarus, 'For aught I kan aspien,
This light nor I ne serven here of nought;
Light is nought goode for sike folkes yen;
But, for the love of God, seyn ye ben brought
In this goode plite, lat now no hevy thought
Ben hangynge in the hertes of yow tweye;'
And bar the candele to the chymeneye.

CLVII.

Sone efter this, though it no nede were,
When she swiche othes swor as hire list devyse
Hadde of hym take, hire thoughte tho no fere,
Ne cause ek non, to bidde hym thennes ryse:
Yet lesse thynge than othes may suffise,
In many a cas, for every wight, I gesse,
That loveth wel meneth but gentilnesse.

CLVIII.

But, in efect, she wolde wyte anon,
Of what man, and ek where, and also whi,
He jalous was, sen ther was cause non:
And ek the signe that he toke it by,
Sho bad hym for to telle hire that bisily;
Or elles, certeyn, she bar hym on honde,
That this was don of malice hire to fonde.

CLIX.

Withouten more, shortly for to seyne,
He most obeye unto his lady heste;
And for the lesse harm he moste feyn;
He seyde hire, when she was at swiche a feste,
She myght on hym han loked at the leste;—
Not I nought what, al deere ynough a ryshe,
As he that nedes most a cause fyshe.

CLX.

And she answarde, 'Swete, al were it so
What harm was that, seyn I non evele mene?
For, by that God that bought us bothe two,
In al thynge is myn entente clene:
Swiche argumentz ne ben nought worth a beene!
Wol ye the childishe jalousye contrefete?
Now were it worthy that ye were ybette.'

CLXI.

Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke;
Leste she be wroth, hym thought his herte deyede;
And seyde, 'Allas! upon my sorwes syke,

Have mercy, swete herte, myn Criseyde!
And if that in tho wordes that I seyde
Be any wronge, I wol no more trespase;
Do what yow liste, I am al in youre grace.'

CLXII.

And she answerde, 'Of gylte misericord!
That is to seyn that I foryeve al this;
And everemore on this nyght yow recorde,
And beth wel war ye do namore amis:'
'Nay, deere herte myn,' quod he, 'iwis!'
'And now,' quod she, 'that I have don yow smerte,
Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte!'

CLXIII.

This Troilus with blisse of that supprised,
Putte alle in Goddes honde, as he that mente
Nothyng but wel, and sodeynly avysed,
He hire in armes faste to hym hente:
And Pandarus, with a ful goode entente,
Layde hym to slepe, and seyde, 'If ye be wyse,
Swouneth nought now, lest more folk arise.'

CLXIV.

What myght or may the sely larke seye,
When that the sparhauk hath hym in hire foot?
I kan namore, but of thise ilke tweye,
(To whom this tale sucre be or soot)
Though that I tarie a yer, somtyme I mote,
After myn auctor, tellen hire gladnesse,
As wel as I have told hire hevynesse.

CLXV.

Criseyde, which that felt hire thus ytake,
As writen clerkes in hire bokes olde,
Right as an aspen leef she gan to quake
When she hym felte hire in his armes folde;
And Troilus, al hool of cares colde,
Gan thonken tho the blisful goddes sevene;
Thus sondry peynes bryngen folk to hevene.

CLXVI.

This Troilus in armes gan hire streyne,
And seyde, 'Swete, as evere mot I gon!
Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne,
Now yeldeth yow, for other boot is non!'
To that Criseyde answerde thus anon,
'Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere,
Ben yolde iwis, I were now nought here!'

CLXVII.

O soth is seyde, that heled for to be,
As of a fevere, or other grete syknesse,
Men moste drynke, as men may ofte se,
Ful bittre drynke: and for to han gladnesse
Men drynken of peynes, and grete distresse:
I mene it here, as for this aventure,
That thorwgh a peyne hath fonden al his cure.

CLXVIII.

And now swetnesse semeth more swete,
That bitternesse assayed was byforne;
For oute of wo in blisse now they flete,

Non swich they felten syn they were borne;
Now is this bet thanne bothe two be lorne!
For love of God! take every womman hede,
To werken thus, if it comyth to the nede.

CLXIX.

Criseyde, al quyt from every drede and teene,
As she that juste cause hadde hym to triste,
Made hym swich feste it joie was to seene,
When she his trouthe and clene entente wiste:
And as aboute a tre, with many a twiste,
Bytrent and writhe *is* the soote wood bynde,
Gan ich of hem in armes other wynde.

CLXX.

And as the new abaysed nyghtyngale,
That stynteth first, when *she* bygynneth synge,
When that she hereth any *herdes* tale,
Or in the hegges any wight sterynge;
And, after, syker doth hire vois oute rynge;
Right so Criseyde, when hire drede stente,
Opned hire herte, and told hym hire entente.

CLXXI.

And right as he that seth his deth yshapen,
And deyen mot, in aught that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth hym escapen,
And from his deth is brought in sykernesse;
For alle this world, in swich present gladnesse
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete:
With *worse* hap God lat us nevere mete!

CLXXII.

Hire armes smale, hire streghte bak and softe,
Her sydes longe, flesshly, smothe, and white,
He gan to stroke; and good thrifte bad ful ofte
Hire snowissh throte, hire brestes rounde and lite:
Thus in this hevene he gan hym to delite,
And therwithal a thousand tymes hire kyste,
That what to don for joie unnethe he wyste.

CLXXIII.

Than seyde he thus:—'O Love! O Charité!
Thi moder ek, Cythara the swete,
After thi-self, next heried be sche,
Venus mene I, the welwilly planete!
And next that, Imeneus, I the grete!
For nevere man was to yow, goddes, holde
As I, which ye han brought from cares colde.

CLXXIV.

'Benigne Love! thou holy bond of thynges!
Who-so wol grace, and liste the nought honouren,
Lo, his desir wol fle withouten wynges;
For noldestow of bounté hem socouron
That serven best, and most alway labouron,
Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
But-if thi grace passed our desertes.

CLXXV.

'And for thow me, that leest koude disserve
Of hem that noumbred ben unto thi grace,
Hast holpen, there I likly was to sterve,

And me bistowed in so heigh a place,
That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
I kan namore, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounté and thyn excellence!'

CLXXVI.

And therwithalle Criseyde anon he kyste,
Of which, certeyn, she felte no disese,
And thus seyde he:—'Now wolde God I wiste,
Myn herte swete, how I you myghte plese!
What man,' quod he, 'was ever thus at ese
As I, in wiche the fairest and the beste,
That evere I sey, deyneth hire herte reste?

CLXXVII.

'Her may men sen that mercy passeth right,
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight;
But, herte myn, of youre benignité,
So thynketh, though that I unworthy be,
Yet mote I nede amenden in som wise,
Right thorugh vertu of youre heighe servyse.

CLXXVIII.

'And, for the love of God, my lady dere,
Syn God hath wrought me for yow I shal serve,
As thus I mene ye wol yet be my stere,
To do me lyve, if that yow list, or sterve,
So techeth me, how that I may disserve
Youre thonke, so that I thorugh mine ignoraunce,
Ne do nothynge that yow be displesaunce.

CLXXIX.

'For certes, fresshe wommanliche wyf,
This dar I seye, that trouthe and diligence,
That shal ye fynden in me al my lyve,
Ny wol *not* certein breken youre diffence;
And if I do, presente or in absence,
For love of Gode, lat sla me with the dede,
If that it like unto youre wommanhede.

CLXXX.

'Iwis,' quod she, 'myn owen hertes liste,
My grounde of ese, and al myn herte deere,
Gramercy! for on *you* is al my triste.
But lat us fal away fro this matere,
For it suffiseth, *this* that seyde is here;
And at o worde, withouten repentaunce,
Welcome my knyghte, my pees, my suffisaunce!'

CLXXXI.

Of hire delite or joies oon the leeste
Were impossibile to my wit to seye;
But juggeth ye that han ben at the feste
In swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye:
I kan namore but thus, this ilke tweye,
That nyght, bitweyene drede and sykernesse,
Felten in love the grete worthynesse.

CLXXXII.

O blisful nyght, of hem so longe isoughte,
How blithe unto hem bothe two thow were!
Why nade I swich oon with my soule ibought?

Ye, or the leste joie that was there?
Awey! thow foule daunger, and thow feere!
And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
That is so heigh, that al ne kan I telle.

CLXXXIII.

But sothe is that though I kan nat talen alle,
As kan myn auctour of his excellence;
And that have I seyde and God to-forne and shal
In every thynge al holly his sentence;
And if that Ich at loves reverence
Have any word in eched for the beste,
Doth therwith al ryght as youre-selven leste.

CLXXXIV.

For myne wordes here and every parte,
I speke hem alle under correccion.
Of you, that felynge han in loves arte,
And putte it alle in youre discreccion
Tencresce or maken dymynucion
Of my langage and that I yow beseche
But now to purpos of my rather speche.

CLXXXV.

This ilke two that ben in armes laft,
So loth to hem asonder gon it were,
That ech hem other wenden ben biraft;
Or elles, lo! this was hire moste feere,
That alle this thynge but nyce dremes were;
For whiche ful oft ech of hem seyde, 'O swete!
Clippe Ich yow thus, or elles I it meete.'

CLXXXVI.

And, lord! so he gan goodely on hire se,
That nevere his loke ne bleynte from hire face;
And seyde, 'O deere herte! may it be
That it be soth, that ye ben in this place?'
'Ye, herte myne, God thanke I of his grace!'
Quod tho Criseyde, and therwithal hym kyste,
That where his spirit was, for joie he nyste.

CLXXXVII.

This Troilus ful oft hire eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and seyde, 'O eyen clere!
It weren ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady deere!
Though ther be mercy writen in youre cheere,
God woote the text*e* ful hard is, soth, to fynde:
How koude ye wythouten bonde me bynde?'

CLXXXVIII.

Therwith he gan hire *faste* in armes take,
And wel an hondreth tymes gan he sike;
Nought swiche sorwful sikes as men make
For wo, or elles when that folk ben sike;
But esy sikes, swiche as ben to like,
That shewed his affeccion withinne;
Of swhiche sykes koude *he* nought bilynne.

CLXXXIX.

Soon after this, thei spak of sondry thynges
As fel to purpos of this aventure;
And pleyynge entrechang*e*den hire rynges,

Of whiche I kan nought tellen no scripture;
But wele I woot, a broche gold*e* and asure,
In whiche a ruby set was like an herte,
Criseyde hym yaf, and stak it on his sherte.

CXC.

Lord! trow ye a coveytous or a wriche,
That blameth love, and halt of it despite,
That of tho pans that he gan mokre and theche,
Was ever yet iyeve hym swhich delite,
As is in love, in o pointe in som plyte?
Nay, douteles! for, al-so God me save,
So parfite joie may no nygard *ne* have.

CXCI.

They wol*e* seyn yis! but, lord! so they lye,
Tho besy wreches ful of wo and drede,
They callen love a woodenes or folye!
But it shal falle hem, as I shal yow rede;
They shall*e* forgon the whyte, and ek the rede;
And lyve in wo, ther God yeve hem myschaunce!
And every lovere in his trouthe avaunce.

CXCII.

As wold*e* God! tho wreches that dispise
Servyse of love hadde erys also longe
As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse;
And therto dronken hadde as hot and stronge
As Crasus dide, for his affectes wronge;
To techen hem, that they *ben* in the vyce,
And lovers nought, although they hold hem nyce.

CXCIII.

Thise ilke two, of whom that I yowe seye,
When that *hire* hertes wel assured were,
Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye,
And ek rehersen how, and whan, and whare
They knewe hem first, and every wo or fere
That was passed; but al swich hevynesse,
I thonke it God, was torned into gladnesse.

CXCIV.

And evermo, when that hem fel to speke
Of any *woo* of swich a tyme agon,
Wyth kyssynge al that tale sholde breke,
And fallen in a new joie anon;
And diden al hire myght, syn they were oon,
For to recoveren blisse, and ben at ese,
And passed wo with joies countrepese.

CXCV.

Reson wol nought that I speke of slep,
For it accordeth nought to my matere;
God woot! thei toke of that ful litel kep!
But lest this nyght, that was to hem so deere,
Ne shold in veyn escape in no manere,
It was byset in joie and besynesse,
Of al that souneth into gentilnesse.

CXCVI.

But when the cok, comune astrologer,
Gan on his breste to bete, and after, crowe;
And Lucifer, the dayes messager,

Gan for to ryse, and out hire bemys throwe;
And estward roos, to hym that koude it knowe,
Fortuna major, than anon Criseyde,
With herte soòr, to Troilus thus seyde:—

CXCVII.

'Myn hertes lyf, my triste, al my plesaunce!
That I was born, allas! what me is woo,
That day of us moot make disseveraunce!
For tyme it is to rise, and hennes go,
Or elles I am lost for evermo.
O nyght, allas! why nyltou over us hove,
As longe as *whan* Alcmena lay by Jove?

CXCVIII.

'O blake Nyght! as folk in bokes rede,
That schapen art by God, this world to hyde
At certein tymes with thy derke wede,
That under that men myghte in rest abyde,
Wel aughten bestes *pleyne*, and folk the chide
That ther as day with labour wolde us breste,
That thow thus fleest, and deynest us naught reste.

CXCIX.

'Thou dost, allas to schortly thyn office,
Thow rakle Nyght; ther God, maker of kynde,
The for thyn haste and thin unkynde vice,
So fast ay to oure hemysperie bynde,
That nevere more under the grounde thow wende;
For now for thow so hyest out of Troye,
Have I forgon thus hastily my joie.'

CC.

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte,
As thoughte hym tho, for piteous distresse,
The blody teres from his herte melte,
As he that nevere yet swiche hevynesse
Assaied hadde out of so grete gladnesse,
Gan therwithal Criseyde, his lady deere,
In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere:—

CCI.

'O cruwel Day! accusour of the joie
That nyght and love han stole, and faste ywrien!
Acorsed be thi comynge into Troie,
For every boure hath oon of thi bryght eyen:
Envyous Day! what liste the so to spyen?
What hastow loste? why sekestow this place?
Ther God thy light so quenche, for his grace!

CCII.

'Allas! what hath this lovers the agylte?
Dispitous Day, thyn be the pyne of Helle!
For many a lover hastow slayn, and wilt;
Thi pourynge in wol nowher lat hem dwelle:
What? profrestow thi light here for to selle?
Go selle it hem that smale seles grave,
We wol the nought, as nedeth no day have.'

CCIII.

And ek the sonne Titan gan he chyde,
And seyde, 'O fool, wel may men the dispise!
Thou hast the Dawnynge al nyght by thi side,

And sooffriste hire so soone up fro the ryse,
For to disese lovers in this wyse:
What! hold youre bed ther thow, and ek thi Morwe!
I bidde God so yeve yow bothe sorwe!'

CCIV.

Therwith ful soor he sighte, and thus he seyde:—
'My lady right, and of my wel or wo
The welle and roote, o goodely myn, Criseyde,
And shal I rise? allas! and shal I so?
Now fele I that myne herte mote atwo;
For how shold I my lyf an oure save,
Syn that with yow is al the lyfe Ich have?

CCV.

'What shal I don? For certes I not how,
Ne when allas! I shal the tyme se,
That in this plit I may ben eft with yow;
And of my lyf, God woot how that shal be,
Syn that desir right now so biteth me,
That I am ded anon but I retourne:
How shal I longe, allas, fro you sojourne!

CCVI.

'But natheles, myn owene lady bright!
Were it *yet* so that I wiste outerly,
That I your humble servant and youre knyght,
Were in youre herte iset so fermely,
As ye in myn, the which thynge trewely
Me lever were than this worldes tweyne,
Yet shold I bet enduren al my payne.'

CCVII.

To that Criseyde answerde right anon,
And with a sik she seyde, 'O herte deere!
The gam, iwis, so ferfoorth now is gon,
That first shal Phebus fallen fro his spere,
And everich egle ben the dowves fere,
And every roche out *of* his place sterte,
Er Troilus out of Cryseydes herte.

CCVIII.

'Ye ben so depe in-with myn herte grave,
That though I wolde it torne out of my thought,
As wysely verray God my soule save,
To dyen in the peyne, I koude nought:
And, for the love of God that us hath wrought,
Lat in youre breyne non other fantasye
So crepe, that it cause me to dye.

CCIX.

'And that ye me wold han as fast in mynde,
As I have yow, that wold I yow beseche;
And if I wiste sothely that to fynde,
God myghte nought a poynte my joies eche.
But, herte myn, withouten more speche,
Beth to me trewe, or elles were it routhe,
For I am thin, by God and by my trouthe!

CCX.

'Beth glad forthi, and lyve in sykernesse.—
Thus seyde I nevere er this, ne shal to mo,—
And if to yowe it were a grete gladnesse,

To torne ayein soon after that ye go,
As fayn wolde I as ye that it were so,
As wisly God myn herte brynge to reste!'
And hym in armes took, and ofte kyste.

CCXI.

Ayens his wille, sith it moot nedes be,
This Troilus up roos and faste hym cledde,
And in his armes took his lady fre
An hondred tyme, and on his way hym spedde;
And with swich wordes, as his herte bledde,
He seyde: 'Farwel, my deere herte swete!
Ther God us graunte sownde and soone to mete!'

CCXII.

To which no worde for sorw she answerde,
So soore gan his partynge hire distreyne,
And Troilus unto his paleys ferde,
As wo bygon as she was, soth to seyne;
So hard hym wronge of sharp desire the peyne
For to ben eft ther he was in plesaunce,
That it may nevere out of his remembraunce.

CCXIII.

Retorned to his real paleys soone,
He soft into his bed gan for to slynke
To slepe longe, as he was wonte to doon,
But al for nought; he may wel ligge and wynke,
But slepe ne may ther in his herte synke,
Thynkynge how she, for whom desire hym brende,
A thousande fold was worth more than he wende.

CCXIV.

And in his thought, gan up and down to wynde
Hire wordes alle, and every countenaunce,
And fermely impressen in his mynde
The leste poynte that to hym was plesaunce;
And verrayliche of thilke remembraunce,
Desire al newe hym brende, and lust to breede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.

CCXV.

Criseyde also, right in the same wise,
Of Troilus gan in hire herte shette
His worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wyse,
His gentilesse, and how she with hym mette,
Thonkynge love he so wel hire bisette;
Desirynge efte to han hire herte deere
In swiche a plit, *that* she dorst make hym chere.

CCXVI.

Pandare, omorw, which that comyn was
Unto his nece and gan hire fayre grete,
Seyde, 'Al this nyght so reyned it, allas!
That al my drede is, that ye, nece swete,
Han litel layser had to slepe and mete:
Al nyght,' quod he, 'hath reyn so do *me* wake,
That som of us, I trowe, hire heddes ake.'

CCXVII.

And ner he com and seyde, 'How stant it nowe?
This murye morwe, nece, how kan ye fare?'
Criseyde answerde, 'Nevere the bet for yowe!

Fox that ye ben, God yeve youre herte care!
God helpe me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trow I,' quod she, 'for al youre wordes white;
O, who-so seth yow, knoweth yow ful lite!'

CCXVIII.

With that sche gan hire face for to wrye
With the shette, and wex for shame rede;
And Pandarus gan under for to prye,
And seyde, 'Nece, if that I shal be dede,
Have here a swerde, and smyte*th* of myn hede:'
With that his armes al sodeynly he thryste
Under hire nekke, and at the last hire kyste.

CCXIX.

I passe al that whiche chargeth nought to seye:
What! God foryafe his deth, and she also
Foryaf; and *with* hire uncle gan to pleye,
For other cause was ther non than so.
But of this thynge right to theffect for to go,
When tyme was, home til hire hous she wente,
And Pandarus hath fully his entente.

CCXX.

Now torne we ayeyn to Troilus,
That resteles ful longe a bedde lay,
And prively sente after Pandarus,
To hym to com in alle the hast he may;
He com anon, nought ones seyde he nay,
And Troilus ful sobrely he grette,
And down upon his bedde syde hym sette.

CCXXI.

This Troilus, with al thaffeccion
Of friendes love that herte may devyse,
To Pandarus on knowes fil adown;
And er that he wold of the place aryse,
He gan hym thonken in his beste wyse;
An hondred sithe he gan the tyme blisse
That he was borne, to brynge hym fro distresse.

CCXXII.

And seyde, 'O frend, of frendes the alder beste
That evere was! the soth for to telle,
Thow haste in hevene ybrought my soule at reste
Fro Flagitoun, the fiery floode of helle;
That, though I myght a thousand tyme selle
Upon a day my lyf in thi servyse,
It mighte nought a moote in that suffice.

CCXXIII.

'The Sonne, which that al the world may se,
Saugh nevere yet, my lyf that dar I laye,
So inly fayre, so goodly, as is she
Whos I am alle, and shal til that I dye;
And that I thus am hires dar I saye,
That thonked be the heighe worthynesse
Of love, and ek thi kynde bysinesse!

CCXXIV.

'Thou hast now me no litel thyng iyeve,
For-why to the obliged be for ay
My lyf; and whi? for thorwh thyn help I lyve,

Or elles ded had I ben many a day:'
And with that worde down in his bed he lay,
And Pandarus ful sobrely hym herde,
Til alle was seyde, and than he hym answerde.

CCXXV.

'My dere frende! if I have don for the,
In any cas, God woot it is me lief,
And am as glade as man may of it be;
God help me so! but take now not agrefe,
That I shal seyne,—bewar of this meschefe,
That thar as thow now brought art in thi blisse,
That thow thi-self ne cause it nat to mysse.

CCXXVI.

'For, of fortunes scharp adversité,
The worste kynde of infortune is this,
A man to han ben in prosperité,
And it remembren, when it passed is.
Thart wyse ynowgh; forthi, do not amys,
Be nought to rakel, theigh thow sitte warme;
For if thow be, certein it wol the harme.

CCXXVII.

'Thow art at ese, and hold the wel therinne;
For, also seur as rede is ever fire,
As grete a craft is kepe wele as wynne;
Bridle alway wel thi speche and thi desire,
For worldly joie halt nought but by a wyre;
That preveth wel, it brest al day so ofte;
Forthy nede is to werken with it softe.'

CCXXVIII.

Quod Troilus, 'I hope, and God to forne,
My deere freend, that I shal so me bere,
That in my gilt ther shal nothyng be lorne,
Ny nyl naught rakel *ben* as for to greven hire;
It nedeth nought this matere oft to tere;
For wistow myn herte wele Pandare,
God woot of this thow woldest litel care.'

CCXXIX.

Tho gan he telle hym of his glade nyght,
And wherof first his herte dred, and how;
And seyde, 'Frend, as I am trewe knyght,
And by that feith I shal to God and yow,
I hadde it nevere half so hoote as now;
And ay the more that desire me biteth,
To love hire beste the more it me deliteth.

CCXXX.

'I not my-self nought wysely what it is,
But now I feele a newe qualité,
Ye! al another than I dide er this:'
Pandare answerde and seyde thus, 'that he
That ones may in hevenes blisse be,
He feleth othere wayes, dar I leye,
Than thylke tyme he first herde of it seye.'

CCXXXI.

This is a worde for al:—this Troilus
Was nevere ful to speke of this matere,
And for to preysen unto Pandarus

The bounté of his righte lady deere,
And Pandarus to thank, and maken chere;
This tale ay was span-newe to begynne,
Til that the nyght departed hem a-twynne.

CCXXXII.

Soone after this, for that fortune it wolde,
Icomen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned, that he sholde,
Ther he was arst, Criseyde his lady mete:
For whiche he felt his herte in joie flete,
And faithfully gan alle the goddes herye;
And lat se nowe, if that he kan be merye.

CCXXXIII.

And holden was the forme, and al the wyse
Of hire comynge, and *ek* of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse;
But pleynly, to theffect right for to go,
In joie and seurté, Pandarus hem two
Abedde broughte, when that hem bothe leste;
And thus they ben in quyete and in reste.

CCXXXIV.

Nought nedeth it to yow, syn they ben met,
To ax at me, if that they blythe were,
For if *it* erst was wel, tho was it bet
A thousand folde; this nedeth nought enquere;
Ago was every sorwe and every feere,
And both iwis they hadde, and so they wende,
As muche joie as herte may comprehende.

CCXXXV.

This nys no litel thynge of for to seye;
This passith every wit for to devyse,
For ich of hem gan otheres luste obeye;
Felicité, which that thise clerkes wyse
Comenden so, ne may nought here suffise;
This joie may nought wryten be with inke;
This passeth al that herte may bithynke.

CCXXXVI.

But cruel Day, so walaway the stounde!
Gan for taproche, as they by signes knewe;
For which hem thoughte felten dethes wounde;
So wo was hem, that changen gan hire hewe,
And Day they gonnen to dispise al-newe,
Callynge it traytour, envyous and worse;
And bitterly the Dayes light they corse.

CCXXXVII.

Quod Troilus, '*Allas!* now I am ware
That Piros, and the swyfte stedes thre,
Which that drawen forth the sonnes chare,
Han gon som by-path in dispite of me;
That maketh it so sone day to be;
And for the sonne hym hasteth thus to ryse,
Ne shal I nevere don hire sacrifise.'

CCXXXVIII.

But nedes day depart hem moste soone;
And when hire speche don was and hire chere,
They twynne anon, as they were wonte to doone,

And setten tyme of metyng eft yfere;
And many nyght they wrought in this manere.
And thus Fortune a tyme ledde in joie
Criseyde, and ek this kynges sone of Troie.

CCXXXIX.

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in syngynges,
This Troilus gan alle his lyf to lede;
He spendeth, jousteth, maketh festeynynges,
He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede;
He hold-aboute hym alway, out of drede,
A world of folk, as com hym wel of kynde,
The fresshiste and the beste he koude fynde.

CCXL.

That swich a vois was of hym and a nevene,
Thorughout the world, of honour and largesse,
That it up rong unto the yate of hevene;
And as in love he was in swich gladnesse,
That in his herte he demed, as I gesse,
That ther nys lovere in this world at ese,
So wel as he, and thus gan love hym to plese.

CCXLI.

The goodlyhed or beauté, which that kynde
In any other lady hadde iset,
Kan nought the mountaunce of a knotte unbynde
Aboute his herte, of alle Criseydes net:
He was so narwe ymasked, and yknet,
That it undon on any maner syde,
That nyl nought ben, for aught that may betide.

CCXLII.

And by the hond ful oft he wolde take
This Pandarus, and *into* gardyn lede,
And swich a feste, and swiche *a* proces make
Hym of Criseyde, and of hire wommanhede,
And of hire beauté, that, withouten drede,
It was an hevene his wordes for to here,
And thanne he wolde synge in this manere :—

CCXLIII.

'Love, that of erth and se hath governaunce!
Love, that his hestes hath in hevene hye!
Love, that with an holsom alliaunce
Halt peples joyned, as hym liste hem gye!
Love, that knetteth law and compaignye,
And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle!
Bynd this acorde, that I have told and telle!

CCXLIV.

'That, that the world, with faith which that is stable,
Dyverseth so, his stoundes concordynge;—
That elementz, that ben so discordable,
Holden a bond, perpetualy durynge;—
That Phebus mot his rosy carte forth brynge,
And that the mone hath lordschip overe the nyghte;—
Al this doth Love, ay heryed be his myght!

CCXLV.

'That, that the se, that gredy is to flowen,
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so
Hise flodes, that so fiersly they ne growen

To drenchen erth and alle for everemo;
And if that Love aught lete his brydel go,
Al that now loveth asonder sholde lepe,
And lost were al that Love halt now to kepe.

CCXLVI.

'Soo, wolde Gode, that auctour is of kynde,
That with his bond, Love of his vertu liste
To cerclen hertes alle, and faste bynde,
That from his bonde no wighte the wey out wyste!
And hertes colde, hem wold I that he twiste,
To make hem love, and that hem liste ay rewe
On hertes soore, and kepe hem that ben trewe.'

CCXLVII.

In alle the nedes for the townes werre
He was, and ay the firste in armes dighte;
And certeynly, but-if that bokes erre,
Save Ector, most idrede of any wight;
And this encres of hardynesse and myght
Com hym of love, his ladyes thank to wynne,
That altered his spirit so withinne.

CCXLVIII.

In tyme of trewes on haukynge wold he ryde,
Or elles hunte boore, beere, or lyon;
The smale bestes leete he gon bysyde;
And when that he com rydynge into town,
Ful oft his lady, from hire wyndow down,
As fresh as faucon comen out of muwe,
Ful redy was hym goodly to saluwe.

CCXLIX.

And most of love and vertu was his speche,
And in dispit hadde alle wrechednesse;
And, douteles, no nede was hym biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthynesse,
And esen hem that weren in distresse,
And glad was he if any wight wel feerde
That lover was, when he it wiste or herde.

CCL.

For, soth to seyn, he lost held every wight,
But-if he were in Loves heigh servyse,
I mene folk that ought it ben of right;
And overe alle this, so wele koude he devyse
Of sentement, and in so unkouthe wyse
Al his array, that every lover thoughte,
That al was wel, what-so he seyde or wroughte.

CCLI.

And, though that he *be* com of blode royal,
Hym liste of pride at no wight for to chace;
Beninge he was to eche in general,
For which he gat hym thanke in every place:
Thus wolde Love, iheried be his grace!
That pride and ire, envye, and avarice,
He gan to fle, and everyich other vice.

CCLII.

Thow lady bryghte, the doughter to Dyon!
Thy blynde and wynged sone, ek dau*n* Cupide!
Ye sustren nyne ek, that by Elycone

In hil Parnaso, listen for tabide!
That ye thus fer *han* deyned me to gyde,
I kan namore, but syn that ye wol wende,
Ye heried be for ay withouten ende!

CCLIII.

Thorwgh yow have I seyde fully in my songe,
Theffect and joie of Troilus servyse,
Al be that ther was som disese among,
As to myn autour listeth to devyse.
My thridde book now ende Ich in this wyse,
And Troilus, in luste and in quiete,
Is with Criseydé, his owen herte swete.

CCLIV.

But al to litel, walawey the while!
Lasteth swich joy, ithonked be Fortune!
That semeth trewest when she wol bigyle,
And kan to fooles so hire song entune,
That she hem hente, and blente, traitour comune!
And, when a wight is from hire whiel ithrowe,
Than laugheth she, and maketh hym the mowe.

CCLV.

From Troilus she gan hire brighte face
Awey to wrythe, and took of hym non hede,
But cast hym clene oute of his lady grace,
And on hire whiel she sette up Diomede;
For whiche myn herte now right gynneth to blede;
And now my penne allas, with which I wryte,
Quaketh for drede of that *I* most endite.

CCLVI.

For how Criseyde Troilus forsoke,
Or at the leeste, how that she was unkynde,
Moot hennesforth ben matere of my book,
As wryten folk thorugh which it is *in* mynde.
Allas, that they sholde evere cause fynde
To speke hire harme! and if they on hire lye,
Iwis hemself shold han the vylenye.

CCLVII.

O ye Herynes! nyghttes doughtren thre,
That endeles compleynen evere in pyne,
Megera, Alecte, and ek Thesiphone!
Thow cruel Mars ek, fader of Quyryne!
This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
So that the los of lyf, and love, yfere,
Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

EXPLICIT TERTIUS LIBER.

INCIPIT QUARTUS LIBER.

I.

YGGYNGE in oost, as I have seyde or this,
The Grekes stronge aboute Troye town,
Byfel, that when that Phebus shynynge is
Upon the breste of Herculis Leoun,
That Ector, with ful many a bolde baroun,
Cast on a day with Grekes for to fighte,
As he was wonte, to greve hem what he myghte.

II.

Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos, and that day they fighten mente;
But, on a day, wele armed bryghte and shene,
Ector and many a worthi wight out wente
With spere in honde, and bigge bowes bente,
And in the berde, withouten lenger lette,
Hire fomen in the felde anon hem mette,

III.

The longe day, with speres sharpe igrounde,
With arwes, dartes, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighten, and bryngen hors and man togrownde,

And with hire axes out the braynes quelle ;
But in the laste stoure soth for to telle,
The folk of Troie hem selven so mysleden,
That, with the wors, at nyght homward they fledden.

IV.

At which day was taken Antenor,
Maugre Polidamas, or Monesteo,
Xantippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polite, or ek the Trojan daun Riupheo,
And other lesse folk, as Phebuseo ;
So that for harme that day the folk of Troie
Dreden to lese a grete part of hire joye.

V.

Of Priamus was yeve, at Grek requeste,
A tyme of trewes ; and tho they gonnen trete
Hire prisoners to chaungen, most and leste,
And, for the surplus, yevene sommes grete.
This thynge anon was *kouth* in every strete,
Both in thessage and town and every where,
And with the firste it come to Calkas ere.

VI.

Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie omange the Grekes soone
He gan in thrynge forth with lordes olde,
And set hym there as he was wonte to done ;
And with a chaunged face hem bad a boone,
For love of God, and don that reverence,
To stynte noyse, and yeve hym audience.

VII.

Than seyde he thus, 'Lo! lordes myn, Ich was
A Trojan, as it is knowen *out* of drede;
And, if *that* yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirste yaf confort to youre nede,
And tolde wel how that ye shoulde spede;
For, dredeles, thorwgh yow shal, in a stownde,
Ben Troie brente, and betten down to grownde.

VIII.

'And in what *forme*, or in what maner wyse
This town *to* shende, and al youre luste tacheve,
Ye han, or this, wel herde it me devyse:
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve;
And, for the Grekes weren me so leve,
I com my-self, in my proper persone,
To teche in this how yow was best to done,

IX.

'Havynge *unto* my tresour, ne my rente,
Right no resport in respecte of your ese;
Thus al my goode I leste, and to yow wente,
Wenynge in this yow lordes for to plese;
But al that los ne doth me no disese,—
I vouchesauf, as wysly have I joye,
For yow to leese al that I have in Troye,—

X.

Save of a doughter that I lefte, allas!
Slepynge at home, when out of Troie I sterte.
O sterne, O cruel fader, that I was!

How myght I have in that so harde an herte?
Allas! I ne hadde brought here in hire sherte!
For sorwe of which I wol nought lyve to morwe,
But-if ye lordes rew upon my sorwe.

XI.

'For by that cause I say no tyme or nowe
Hire to delivere, Ich holden have my pees;
But now or nevere, if it like yowe,
I may hire have, right soone douteles:
O helpe and grace! amonge al this prees,
Rew upon this olde caytif in distresse,
Syn I thorwgh yow have al this hevynesse!

XII.

'Ye have now caught, and fetered in prisoun,
Trojans inowe, and if youre willes be,
My childe with oon may han redempcion;
Now, for the love of God, and of bounté!
Oon of so fele, allas, so yif hym me!
What nede were it this preyere for to werne,
Syn ye shul both han folk and town as yerne?

XIII.

'On peril of my lif I shal nat lye,
Apollo hath me told it feithfully,
I have ek founde by astronomye,
By sort, and by augurye ek trewly,
And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,
That fir and flaumbe on al the town shal sprede,
And thus shal Troie torne to asshen dede.

XIV.

'For certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
That makeden the walles of the town,
Ben with the folk of Troie alwey so wrothe,
That they wol brynge it to confusioun;
Right in despit of kyng Lameadon,
Bycause he nolde payen hem here hire,
The town of Troie shal ben set on fyre.'

XV.

Tellynge his tale alway, this olde greye,
Humble in his speche and in his lokynge eke,
The salte teres from his eyen tweye,
Ful faste ronnen down by eyther cheeke;
So longe he gan of socoure hem byseke,
That, for to hele hym of his sorwues soore,
They yave hym Antenor withouten more.

XVI.

But who was glad ynough but Calkas tho?
And of this thynge ful soone his nedes layde
On hem that sholden for the tretis go,
And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde,
To brynge hom kynge Thoas and Cryseyde;
And, whan Priamus his save garde sente,
Thembassadours to Troie streighte wente.

XVII.

The cause itolde of hire comynge, the *olde*
Priam the kynge, ful soone in general,
Let here-upon his parlement to holde,

Of which theffect rehercen yow I shal:
Thembassatours ben answerde for fynal,
Theschaunge of prisoners, and alle this nede
Hem lyketh wele, and forth in they procede.

XVIII.

This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde;
For which ful soone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde;
But, natheles, he no worde to hit seyde;
List men sholde his affeccion espye,
With mannes herte he gan hys sorwes drye,

XIX.

And, ful of angwish and of grisley drede,
Abod what lordes wolde unto it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as God forbede!
Theschaunge of hir, than thought he thynges tweye:
First, how to save hire honour; and what weye
He myghte best theschaunge of hire withstonde,
Ful faste he caste how al thys myghte stonde.

XX.

Love hym made al prest to don hyre bide,
'Or rather dyen than she sholde go;
But reson seyde hym, on that other syde,
'Withouten assente of hire ne do not so,
Leste for thi werke she wolde be thi fo;
And seyde, that thorwgh thy medlynge is iblowe
Youre eyther love, ther it was erst unknowe.'

XXI.

For wich he gan deliberen for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde *that* she wente,
He wolde lat hem graunte what hem liste,
And telle his lady firste what that they mente;
And whan that she had*de* seyde hym hire entente,
Therefter wolde he werken also blyve,
Theigh al the world ayeyn it wold*e* stryve.

XXII.

Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
For Antenor how they wolde han Cryseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrely answerde:—
'Sires, she nys no prisoner,' he seyde,
'I not on yow who that this charge layde;
But, on my part, ye may eft-sones hem telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle.'

XXIII.

The noyse of peple up stirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw iset on fyre,
For Infortune it wolde for the nones,
They sholden hire confusion desire:
'Ector,' quod they, 'what gost may *yow* enspire
This womman thus to shilde, and don us lese
Daun Antenor?—a wrong wey now ye chese,—

XXIV.

'That is so wis, and eke so bolde baroun;
And we han nede *of* folk, as men may se,
He is ek on the grettest of this town;

O Ector, lat tho fantasyes be!
O kynge Priam,' quod they, 'thus siggen we,
That al oure vois is to forgon Criseyde.'
And to delyveren Antenor they preyde.

XXV.

O Juvenal, lorde, trewe is thy sentence,
That litel witen folk what is to yerne;
That they ne fynde in hire desire offence,
For cloude of errour ne lat hem discerne
What best is; and lo! here ensaumple as yerne —
This folk desiren now delyveraunce
Of Antenor, that brought hem to myschaunce.

XXVI.

For he was after traitour to the town
Of Troie; allas! they quite hym oute to rathe!
O nyce world, lo! thy discrecioun!
Criseyde, whiche that nevere dide hem scathe,
Shal now no longer in hire blisse bathe,
But Antenor, he shal com hom to towne,
And she shal out, thus seyde here and howne.

XXVII.

For whiche delibered was by parlemente,
For Antenor to yelden out Criseyde,
And pronounced by the president,
Al-theigh that Ector 'nay' ful ofte preyde;
And, finaly, what wight that it withseyde,
It was for nought, it moste ben, and sholde,
For substaunce of the parlement it wolde.

XXVIII.

Departed out of parlement echone,
This Troilus, withouten wordes mo,
Unto his chaumbre spedde hym faste allone,
But-if it were a man of his or two,
The whiche he bad out faste for to go,
Bycause he wolde slepen, as he seyde;
And hastely upon his bed hym layde.

XXIX.

And as in wynter leves ben byraft,
Eche efter other, til the tre be bare,
So that ther nys but bark and braunche ylaft,
Lith Troilus, byraft of eche welfare,
Ybounden in the blake barke of care,
Disposed wode out of his wit to brayde,
So soore hym sat the chaungynge of Cryseyde.

XXX.

He ryste hym up, and every dore he shette,
And wyndow eke, and tho this sorwful man
Upon his beddes syde adown hym sette,
Ful like a dede ymage, pale and wan;
And in his breste the heped wo bygan
Out brast, and he to werken in this wyse,
In his wodenesse, as I shal yow devyse.

XXXI.

Right as the wilde bole bigynneth sprynge
Now here, now ther, ydarted to the herte,
And of his deth roreth in compleynnynge;

Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
Smytynge his brest ay with his fistes smerte;
His hed to the walle, his body to the grounde,
Ful ofte he swapte, hymselven to confounde.

XXXII.

Hys eyen two, for pité of *his* herte,
Out stremeden as swyft*e* welles tweye;
The heigh*e* sobbes of his sorwes smerte
His spech hym refte, unnethes myghte he seye,
'O deth, allas! why nyltow do me deye?
Acorsed be that day whiche that Nature
Shope me to ben a lyves creature!'

XXXIII.

But efter, when the furie and al the rage,
Which that his herte twiste, and fast*e* threste
By leng*the* of tyme, somwhat gan aswage,
Upon his bedde he layde hym down to reste;
But tho bigan his teres more oute breste,
That wonder is the body may suffise
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.

XXXIV.

Than seyde he thus:—'Fortune, allas the while!
What have I don? what have I thus agilt?
How myghtestow for routhe me bygyle?
Is ther no grace? and shal I thus be spilte?
Shal thus Criseyde awey, for that thow wilt?
Allas! how maistow in thyn herte fynde
To ben to me thus cruel and unkynde?

XXXV.

'Have *I* the nought honoured al my lyve,
As thow wel woost, above the Goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro joie thus depryve?
O Troilus! what may men the now calle,
But wrech of wreches, out of honour falle
Into miserie? in whiche I wol biwaille
Criseyde allas! til that the breth me faille.

XXXVI.

'Allas, Fortune! if that my life in joie
Displesed hadde unto thy foule envye,
Whi ne haddestow my fader, kyng of Troye,
Byraft the life, or don my bretheren dye,
Or slayn my-self, that thus compleyne and crye?
I combre world, that may of nothyng serve,
But evere dye, and nevere fully sterve.

XXXVII.

'If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought rought I whidere thow woldest me stere,
And hire, allas! than hastow me biraft:
But everemore, lo! this is thy manere,
To reve a wyght that moost is to hym dere,
To preve in that thi gerful violence:
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence.

XXXVIII.

'O verrey Lord, O Love, O God, allas!
That knowest best myn herte and alle my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas,

If I forgo that I so deere have bought?
Syn ye Criseyde and me han fully brought
Into your grace, and both oure hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, allas! it be repeled?

XXXIX.

'What I may don, I shal, whil I may dure
On lyve, in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune, or this disaventure,
Allone as I was borne, iwys compleyne;
Ne nevere wol I sen it shyne or reyne,
But ende I wol, as Edippe, in derkenesse
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.

XL.

'O verrey goost, that errest to and fro!
Whi nyltow flen out of the wofulleste
Body that evere myght on grounde go?
O soule! lurkynge in this wo unneste!
Fle forth out myn herte, and lat it breste,
And folow alwey Criseyde, thi lady deere!
Thi righte place is now no longer here.

XLI.

'O woful eyen two! syn youre disporte
Was al to sen Criseydes eyen brighte,
What shal ye don, but, for my disconforte,
Stonden for naught, and wepen out your sighte,
Syn she is queynte, that *wont* was yow to lighte?
In veyne, fro this forth, have ich eyen tweye
Iformed, syn youre vertu is aweye.

XLII.

'O my Criseyde! O lady soverayne
Of this woful soule that thus cryeth!
Who shal now yeven confort to thi peyne?
Allas! no wight; but, when myn herte dyeth,
My spirit, which that so unto yow hyeth,
Receyve in gre, for that shal ay yow serve;
Forthy no fors is, though the body sterve.

XLIII.

'O ye lovers! that heighe upon the whiel
Ben set of Fortune in goode aventure,
God lene that ye fynde ay love of stiel,
And longe mote youre lyf in joie endure!
But, whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that youre felowe resteth there;
For I loved ek, though Ich unworthy were.

XLIV.

'O olde, unholsom, and myslyved man!
Calkas I mene, allas! what aylede the
To ben a Greke, syn thow ert born Trojan?
O Calkas! which that wolt my bane be,
In cursed tyme wast thow borne for me!
As wolde blisful Jove, for his joie,
That I the hadde wher I wold in Troie!'

XLV.

A thousand sikes hottere than the glede,
Out of his breste, ech efter othere, wente,
Medled with pleyntes new, his wo to fede,

For which his woful teris nevere stente;
And, shortly so hise peynes hym to-rente,
And wax so maat, that joie or penaunce
He feleth non, but lith forth in a traunce.

XLVI.

Pandare, which that in the parlement
Hadde herde what every lord and burges seyde,
And how ful graunted was, by oon assente,
For Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
Gan wel neigh woode out of his wit to breyde;
So that for wo he nyste what he mente,
But, in a rees, to Troilus he wente.

XLVII.

A certeyn knyght, that for the tyme kepte
The chaumbre dore, undid it hym anon;
And Pandare, that ful tendrelych wepte,
Into the derke chaumbre, as stille as stone,
Towarde the bedde gan softly to gone,
So confus, that he nyste what to seye;
For verray wo, his wit was neigh awaye.

XLVIII.

And with his chere and lokynge al to-torn,
For sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stode this woful Troilus biforn,
And on his pitous face he gan biholden;
But, Lord! so ofte gan his herte colden!
Seynge his frend in wo, whos hevynesse
His herte slough, as thoughte hym, for distresse.

XLIX.

This woful wight, this Troylus, that felte
His frend Pandare ycomen him to se,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte;
For which this sorwful Pandare, of pité,
Gan for to wepe as tendrelich as he;
And specheles thus ben thise ilke tweye,
That neither myght a worde for sorwe seye.

L.

But, at the laste, this woful Troilus,
Neigh ded for smerte, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noise he seyde thus,
Amang hise sobbes and his sikes sore;—
'Lo! Pandare, I am ded withouten more!
Hastow nat herd at parlement,' he seyde,
'For Antenor how loste is my Criseyde?'

LI.

This Pandarus ful ded and pale of hewe,
Ful pitously answerde, and seyde, 'Yis!
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I have herde, and woot al how it is!
O mercy God! who wold have trowed this?
Who wold have wende, that in so litel a throwe,
Fortune oure joye wold have overthrowe?

LII.

'For in this worlde there is no creature,
Als to my dome, that evere saugh ruyne
Straunger than this, thorwgh cas or aventure;

But who may al eschue or al devyne? 361
Swich is this world! forthi I thus defyne:—
Ne truste no wight to fynden in Fortune
Ay properté; hir yiftes ben comune!

LIII.

'But tel me this, why thow ert now so mad
To sorwen thus? why listow in this wyse,
Syn thi desire al holye hastow had,
So that by right it ought ynough suffise?
But I that nevere felt in my servyse,
A frendly chere or lokynge of an eye, 370
Lat me thus wepe and waylen til I dye.

LIV.

'And over al this, as thow wel woost thi-selve,
This town is ful of ladis al aboute,
And to my doom, fayrer than swich twelve
As evere she was, shal I fynden in som route,
Ye! oon or two, withouten any doute:
Forthi be glade, myn owen deere brother!
If she be lost, we shal recovere another.

LV.

'What! God forbede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thynge were, and in noon other wight! 380
If on kan synge, another kan wel daunce;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light;
And this is fair, and that kan goode aright;
Ech for his vertu holden is for deere,
Both heroner, and faucoun for ryvere.

LVI.

'And ek as writ Zauzis, that was ful wis,
The newe love oute chaceth oft the olde:
And upon newe cas lith a newe avys;
Thynke ek thi lif to saven ertow holden,
Swich fire by processe shal of kynde colden;
For, syn it is but casuel plesaunce,
Som cas shal putte it oute of remembraunce.

LVII.

'For also seur as day cometh after nyght,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or elles selde seynge of a wight,
Don olde affeccions alle over go;
And for thi part, thow shal have oon of two,
Tabrigge with thi bittre peynes smerte;
Absens of hire shal dryve hire out of herte.'

LVIII.

These wordes seyde he for the noones alle
To helpe his frend, lest he for sorwe dyede,
For douteles to don his wo to falle,
He roughte nought what unthrift that he seyde:
But Troilus, that neigh for sorw dyede,
Took litel hede of alle that evere he mente;
Oon ere it herde, at tother out it wente.

LIX.

But, atte last, answerde, and seyde, 'Frende,
'This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,
Were wel sittynge if that I were a fend,

To traysen a wight that trewe is unto me ;
I preye God let this counseyle never ithe,
But do me rather sterve anon right here,
Er I thus do, as thow me woldest leere !

LX.

' She that I serve, iwis, what so thow seye,
To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
Shal han me holly hires, til that I deye ;
For, Pandarus, syn I have trowthe hire hight,
I wol nat ben untrewe for no wight,
But, as hire man, I wole ay lyve and sterve,
And nevere *noon* other creature serve.

LXI.

' And ther thow seist thow shalt as faire fynde
As she,—lat be ! make no comparisoun
To creature yformed here by kynde !
O leve Pandare ! in conclusyoun,
I wol not ben of thyn opinyoun,
Touchyng al this ; for whiche I the beseche,
So holde thi pees ; thow slest me with thi speche !

LXII.

' Thow biddest me I sholde love another
Alle freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go ;
It lith nat in my power, leeve brother !
And though I myghte, I wol*de* not do so ;
But kanstow pleyen raket, to and fro,
Nettle in dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare ?
Now foule falle hire for thi wo and care !

LXIII.

'Thow farest ek by me, thow Pandarus!
As he that whan a wight is wo bygon,
He cometh to hym apaas, and seith right thus:—
'Thynke nat on smerte, and thow shalt fele none!'
Thow moost me ferst transmuwen in a stoon,
And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thow so lightly do my wo to falle.

LXIV.

'The deth may wel out of my brest departe
The lyf, so longe may this sorw myne;
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
Out nevermo, but down with Proserpyne,
Whan I am dede, I wol go wone in pyne;
And ther I wol eternaly compleyne
My wo, and how that twynned be we tweyne.

LXV.

'Thow hast here made an argument for fyne,
How that it sholde lasse peyne be
Criseyde to forgon, for she was myne,
And lyved in ese and in felicite;
Why gabbestow, that seydest unto me,
That hym is wors that is fro wel ithrowe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele yknowe?

LXVI.

'But tel me now, syn that the thynketh so lyght
To chaungen so in love ay to and fro,
Why hastow nat doon bysily thy myghte

To chaungen hire, that doth the al thi wo?
Why nyltow lete hire fro thin herte go?
Why nyltow love another lady swete,
That may thin herte setten in quiete?

LXVII.

'If thow hast hadde in love ay yet meschaunce,
And kanst it nought oute of thyne herte dryve.
I that lyvede in luste and in plesaunce
With hire, as muche as creature on lyve,
How shold I that foryete, and that so blyve?
O wher hastow ben so longe hyde in muwe,
That kanst so wel and formeliche arguwe?

LXVIII.

'Nay! God woot, nought worthi is al thi rede!
For which, for what that evere may befalle,
Withouten wordes mo, I wol be dede:
O Deth! that endere ert of sorwes alle,
Com now, syn I so oft efter the calle!
For sely is that deth, soft for to seyne,
That oft icleped, cometh and endeth peyne.

LXIX.

'Wel wote I, whil my lif was in quiete,
Er thow me slewe I wolde have yeven hire;
But now thi comynge is to me so swete,
That in this world I no thinge so desire:
O Deth, syn with this sorw I am a-fire,
Thow outher do me anon in teres drenche,
Or with thy colde strooke myn heerte quenche!

LXX.

'Syn that thow slest so fele in sondry wyse
Ayens hire wil, unpreyed day and nyghte,
Do me at my requeste this servyse!
Delivere now the world, so dostow right,
Of me, that am the wofulleste wight
That evere was; for tyme is that I sterve,
Syn in this world of *right* nought may *I* serve.'

LXXI.

This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alambic, ful faste;
And Pandarus gan hold his tonge stille,
And to the grounde his eyen down he caste;
But natheles, thus thought he at the laste,
'What? pardé! rather than my felawe deye,
Yet shal I somwhat more unto hym seye.'

LXXII.

And seyde, 'Frende, syn thow haste swich distresse,
And syn the list myn argumentz to blame,
Why nylt thy selven helpen don redresse,
And with thi manhod letten al this grame?
Go ravyshe hire, ne kanstow nought for shame?
And outher lat hire out *of* towne fare,
Or hold hire stille, and leve thi nyce fare.

LXXIII.

'Artow in Troye, and hast non hardimente
To tak a womman which that loveth the,
And wold hireselven ben of thyn assente?

Now is nat this a nyce vanyté?
Rise up anon, and lat this wepynge be!
And right thow ert a man, for in this houre
I wol ben dede, or she *shal* bleven oure.'

LXXIV.

To this answerde hym Troylus ful softe,
And seyde, 'Pardé, leve brother deere,
Al this have I myself yet thought ful ofte,
And more thynge than thow devysest here;
But why this thynge is laft, thow shalt wel here,
And when thow me hast yeven an audience,
Therefter maistow telle alle thi sentence.

LXXV.

First, syn thow woost this town hath alle this werre
For ravysshyng of wommen so by myght,
It sholde nought be suffred me to erre,
As it stant now, ne don so grete unright;
I sholde han also blame of every wyght,
My fadres graunte if that I so withstode,
Syn she is chaunged for the townes goode.

LXXVI.

'I have ek thought, so it were hire assente,
To axe hire at my fader of his grace;
Than thynke I, thys were hire acusemente,
Syn wel I woot I may hire nought purchace;
For syn my fader, in so heigh a place
As parlement, hath hire eschaunge enseled,
He nyl for me his lettre be repeled.

LXXVII.

'Yet drede I most hire herte to pertorbe
With violence, if I do swich a game;
For if I wolde it openly distorbe,
It moost be disclaundre to hire name,
And me were levere ded than hire defame;
As nolde God, but if I sholde have
Hire honour levere than my lif to save.

XXVIII.

'Thus am I lost, for ought that I kan se;
For certein is, syn that I am hire knyght,
I most hire honour levere han than me
In every cas, as lovers aught of righte;
Thus am I in desire and reson twyght:—
Desire, for to distourben hire, me redeth,
And reson nyl *not*, so myn herte dredeth.

LXXIX.

Thus wepynge, that he koude nevere cesse,
He seyde, 'Allas how shal I, wreche, fare?
For wel fele I alway my love encresce,
And hope is lasse and lasse alway, Pandare!
Encresen ek the causes of my care,
So waylawey! why nyl myn herte breste?
For as in love ther is but litel rest.'

LXXX.

Pandare answerde, 'Frend! thou mayst for me
Don as the lest; but hadde Ich it so hoote,
And thyn estate, she sholde go with me!

Though al this town cryed on this thynge by note,
I nolde sette at al that noyse a grote;
For when men han wel cryed, than wol they rowne,
Ek wonder last but nine nyght nevere in towne.

LXXXI.

Devyne nat in reson ay so depe,
Ne curtaisly, but helpe thi-self anon;
Bet is that othere than thi-selven wepe;
And namely, syn ye two ben al oone,
Rise up, for by myn hed she shal not gon!
And rather be in blame a lite ifounde,
Than sterve here as a gnat withouten wounde.

LXXXII.

'It is no shame unto yow, ne no vyce,
Hire to withholden, that ye loveth most;
Paraunter she myght holden the for nyce,
To laten hire go thus unto the Grekes oost;
Thynk ek, Fortune, as wel thi-selven wooste,
Helpeth hardy man unto his emprise,
And weyveth wreches for hire cowardyse.

LXXXIII.

'And, though thi lady wolde alite hire greve,
Thow shalt thi-self thi pees here-efter make;
But, as for me, certeine, I kan not leve,
That she wolde it as now for evel take.
Why sholde thanne of-fered thyn herte quake?
Thynk ek how Paris hath, that is thi brother,
A love; and why shaltowe not have another?

LXXXIV.

'And, Troylus, o thynge I dar the swere,
That if Criseyde, which that is thi lief,
Now loveth the, as wel as thow dost hire,
God help me so! she nyl not take a-gryefe,
Theigh thow do boote anon in this meschief;
And if she wilneth fro the for to passe,
Thanne is she fals, so love hire wel the lasse.

LXXXV.

'Forthi, take herte, and thynk right as *a* knyght,
Thorwe love is broken alday every lawe;
Kythe now somwhat thi curage and thi myght;
Have mercy on thiself for any awe;
Lat not this wreched wo thyne herte gnawe;
But, manly, set the world on six and sevene,
And if thow deye a martyr, go to hevene.

LXXXVI.

'I wol myself ben with the at this dede,
Theigh Ich and alle my kyn, upon a stownde,
Shul in a strete, as dogges, liggen dede,
Thorwgh gyrt with many wyde and blody wounde;
In every cas I wol a frend ben founde;
And if the list here sterven as a wreche,
Adieu, the devel spede hym that it reche!'

LXXXVII.

This Troilus gan with tho wordes quykken,
And seyde, 'Frende, graunte mercy, Ich assente;
But certeynly, thow maist not so me priken,

Ne peyne non ne may me so tormente,
That, for no cas, it is not myn entente,
At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde,
To ravysshen hire, but if hire-self it wolde.'

LXXXVIII.

'Why, so mene I,' quod Pandarus, '*alle this day*;
But tel me thanne, hastow hire wil asayde,
That sorwest thus?' and he answerde hym, 'Nay.'
'Wherof ertow,' quod Pandare, 'thanne amayed,
That nost not that she wol ben yvel apeyed
To ravysshen hire, syn thow hast nought ben there,
But if that Jove told it in thyn ere?

LXXXIX.

'Forthy ris up, as nought ne were, anon,
And wessh thi face, and to the kyng thow wende,
Or he may wondren wheder thow ert gon;
Thow most with wisdom hym and other blende,
Or upon cas he may efter the sende,
Er thow be war; and shortly, brother deere,
Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere.

XC.

'For I shal shape it so that sikerly
Thow shalt this nyght somtyme, in som manere,
Com speken with thi lady prively,
And by hire wordes ek, as by hire cheere,
Thow shalt ful soone aperceyve and wel here
Al hire entent, and, in this cas, the beste;
And fare now wele, for in this poynte I reste.'

XCI.

The swifte Fame, which that false thynges
Egal reporteth, like the thynges trewe,
Was thorugh Troye yfled, with preste wynges,
Fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
How Calkas doughter, with hire bryghte hewe,
At parlement, withouten wordes more,
Igraunted was in chaunge of Antenore.

XCII.

The whiche tale anon right as Cryseyde
Hadde herde, she, which that of hir fader roughte,
As in this cas, right nought, ne when he deyede,
Ful bisily to Juppiter besoughte
Yeve hym meschaunce that this tretis broughte:
But shortly, lest this tales sothe were,
She dorst at no wight axen it for feere.

XCIII.

As she that hadde hire herte and al hire mynde
On Troilus ysette so wonder faste,
That al this world ne myghte hire love unbynde,
Ne Troilus out of hire herte caste;
She wol ben his whil that hire lif may laste;
And she thus brenneth botho in love and drede,
So that she nyste what was best to rede.

XCIV.

But as men seen in town, and alle aboute,
That wommen usen frendes to visite,
So to Criseyde of wommen com a route,

For pitous joie, and wenden hire delite,
And with hire tales, dere ynough a myte!
This wommen, which that in the cité dwelle,
They set hem down, and seyde as I shal telle.

XCV.

Quod firste that oon, 'I am glad trewely,
By-cause of yow that shal youre fader se.'
Another seyd, 'Iwys, so nam not I,
For *al* to litel hath she with us be.'
Quod tho the thridde, 'I hope, iwis, that she
Shal brynge us the pees on every syde,
Thanne, when she goth, almyghty God hire gyde!'

XCVI.

Tho wordes, and tho wommannisshe thynges,
She herde hem right as though she *th*ennes were,
For, God it woot, hire herte on other thynges is;
Although the body sate amange hem there,
Hire advertens is alwey elles-where;
For Troilus ful fast her soule soughte,
Withouten worde, on hym alwey she thoughte.

XCVII.

Thise wommen that thus wenden hire to pleese,
Aboute nought gonne al hire tales spende;
Swich vanité ne kan don hire non ese,
As she that al this mene while brende
Of other passioun than *that* they wende;
So that she felt almoost her herte dye
For wo, and wery of that compaignye.

XCVIII.

[For wych she no lenger myght restreyne
Hir teres, they gonne soo up to welle;
That yafe signes of the bitter peyne,
In wych hyr spirit was, and muste dwelle,
Remembryng hyr from heven unto wych helle
She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she syghte.]

XCIX.

And thilke fooles, sittynge hire aboute,
Wenden that she wepte and sykede soore,
Bycause that *she* shold out of that route
Departen, and nevere pleye with hem more;
And they that hadde yknowen hire of yoore,
Seigh hire so wepe, and thought it kyndenesse,
And ech of hem wepte for hire distresse

C.

And bisily they gonnen hire conforten
Of thynge, God woot, on which she litel thoughte;
And with hire tales wenden hire disporten,
And to be glad they oft hire bysoughte;
But which an ese therwith they hire wroughte,
Right as a man is esed for to feele,
For ach of hed to clawen hym on his heele.

CI.

But efter al this nyce vanité,
They took hire leve, and hom they wente alle,
Criseyde, ful of sorwful pitee,

Into hire chaumbre up wente out of the halle,
And on hire bed she gan for ded to falle,
In purpos nevere thennes for to rise,
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yowe devyse.

CII.

Hire ownded here, that sonnyssh was of hewe,
She rente, and ek hire fyngeres longe and smale
She wronge ful oft, and bad God on hire rewe,
And with the deth to don boote on hire bale;
Hire hew, whilom bright, that tho was pale,
Bar witnesse of hire wo, and hire constreynte;
And thus she spake, sobbynge in hire compleynte.

CIII.

'Allas!' quod she, 'out of this region,
I, woful wrech and infortuned wight,
And born in corsed constellacioun,
Moot goon, and thus departen fro my knyght!
Wo worth, allas! that ilke dayes lyght,
On which I seigh hym first with eyen tweyne,
That causeth me, and Ich hym, al this peyne!'

CIV.

Therwith the teres from hire eyen two
Down fille, as shoures in Aprille swithe;
Hire white brest she bet, and for the wo,
Efter the deth she cryed a thousand sythe,
Syn he that wont hire wo was for to lithe,
She moot forgon; for which disaventure
She held hire-self a forlost creature.

CV.

She seyd, 'How shal he doon and Ich also?
How shold I lyve if that I fro hym twynne?
O deere herte, ek, that I love so,
Who shal that sorw slen, that ye ben inne?
O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this synne!
O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
Wo worth that day that thow me bere on lyve!

CVI.

'To what fyn shold I lyve and sorwen thus?
How shold a fissh withouten water dure?
What is Criseyde worth from Troilus?
How shold a plaunte, or lyves creature,
Lyve withouten his kynde noriture?
For which ful oft a by worde here I seye,
That rooteles mot grene soone deye.

CVII.

'I shal doon thus, syn neither swerde ne darte
Dar I non handlen for the cruelté,
That ilke day that I from yow departe,
If sorwe of that nyl nat my bane be,
Thanne shal no mete or drynke com in me,
Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
And thus my-selven wold I don to dethe.

CVIII.

'And, Troilus, my clothes everychon
Shal blake ben, in tokennynge, herte swete!
That I am out *as* of this worlde *ygon*,

That wonte was yow to setten in quiete;
And of myn ordre, ay til deth me mete,
The observaunce evere in youre absens,
Shal sorw ben, compleynte, and abstinence.

CIX.

'Myn herte, and ek the woful goost ther inne,
Byquethe I with youre spirit to compleyne
Eternaly, for they shal nevere twynne;
For though in erith ytwynned be we tweyne,
Yet in the feld of pité, out of peyne,
That height Elysos, shal we ben ifeere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his feere.

CX.

'Thus, herte myne, for Antenor, allas!
I soone shal ben chaunged, as I weene;
But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas?
How shal youre tendre herte this sustene?
But, herte myne, foryet this sorw and teene,
And me also; for, sothly for to seye,
So ye wel fare, I reche noughte to deye.'

CXI.

How myght it evere *yred* ben or ysonge,
The pleynte that she made in hire distresse,
I not; but, as for me, my litel tonge
If I discryven wold hire hevynesse,
It sholde make hire sorwe seme lesse
Thanne that it was, and childisshly deface
Hire heighe compleynte; and therfor Ich it pace.

CXII.

Pandare, which that sente from Troilus
Was unto Criseyde, as ye han herde devyse,
That for the beste it was accorded thus,
And he ful glad to don hym that servyse
Unto Criseyde, in a ful faire wyse,
Ther as she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hire to telle alle holly his message;

CXIII.

And fonde that she hire-selven gan to grete
Ful pitously; for, with hire salte teres,
Her breste, hire face ybathed was ful wete,
Hire myghty tresses of hire sonnysshe heres
Unbroiden, hangen al aboute hire eeres;
Which yaf hym verray signal of matere
Of deth, which that hire herte gan desire.

CXIV.

Whan she hym saugh, she gan for sorwe anon
Hire tery face atwixe hire armes hyde;
For which this Pandare is so wo bigon,
That in the hous he myght unneth abyde,
As he that pité hadde on every syde;
For if Cryseyde hadde erst compleyned soore,
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tyme moore.

CXV.

And in hire aspre pleynte, thus she seyde:—
'Pandare first, of joies moo than two
Was cause causynge unto me, Criseyde

That now transmuwed ben in cruel wo;
*W*her shal I seye to yow welcom or no,
That aldirfirste me brought unto servyse
Of love, allas! that endeth in swich wyse?

CXVI.

'Endeth thanne love in wo? Ye! or men lieth,
And alle worldly blisse, as thynketh me;
The ende of blisse ay sorw it ocupieth;
And who-so troweth not that it so be,
Lat hym upon me, woful wreche, ysee,
That my-self hate, and ay *my* burthe acorse,
Felynge alwey, fro wikke I go to worse.

CXVII.

'Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al atones,
Peyne, torment, pleynte, wo and distresse;
Out of my woful body harm ther non is,
As angwissh, langour, cruel bitternesse,
Anoy, smert, drede, furye, and ek sekenesse;
I trowe iwis from *heven* teres reyne,
For pité of myn aspre and cruel peyne.'

CXVIII.

'And thow, my suster, ful of disconfort,'
Quod Pandarus, 'what thynkestow to doo?
Why ne hastow to thi-selven som reporte?
Why wiltow thus thiself allas fordo!
Leef al this werk, and take now hede to
That I shal seyne, and herkene, of goode entente,
This message, whiche by me Troilus *the* sent.'

CXIX.

Tourned hire tho Criseyde a wo makynge
So grete, that it a deth was for to se;
'Allas!' quod she 'what wordes may ye brynge?
What wol my deere herte seyne to me,
Which that I drede neveremo to se?
Wol he han pleynte or teres or I wende?
I have inoughe, if he therefter sende.'

CXX.

She was right swich to seen in hire visage,
As is that wight that men on beere bynde;
Hire face, like of Paradis the ymage,
Was al ichaunged in another kynde;
The pleye, the laughtre men was wonte to fynde
On hire, and ek hire joies everychone
Ben fled, and thus lith now Criseyde allone.

CXXI.

Aboute hire eyen two a purpre rynge
Bytrent, in sothfast toknynge of hyre peyne,
That to beholde it was a dedely thynge;
For which Pandare myghte nat restreyne
The teres from his eyen for to reyne;
But natheles, as he best myght, he seyde
From Troylus thise wordes to Cryseyde.

CXXII.

'Loo! nece, I trowe *wel* ye han herde al howe
The kynge, with other lordes, for the beste,
Hath made eschaunge of Antenor and yowe,

That cause is of this sorw and this unreste;
But how this cas doth Troylus moleste,
That may non erthly mannes tonge seye;
For verray wo his wit is alle aweye.

CXXIII.

'For which we han so sorwed, he and I,
That into litel both it hadde us slawe;
But, thorugh my conseil this day fynaly,
He somwhat is fro wepynge now withdrawe;
And semeth me that he desireth fawe
With yow to ben al nyght for to devyse
Remede in this, if ther *were* any wyse.

CXXIV.

'This, shorte and pleyne, theffect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit kan comprehende;
For ye that ben of tormente in swich rage,
May to no longe prologe as now entende.
And hereupon ye may answer to hym sende;
And, for the love of God, my nece deere,
So lef this wo or Troilus be heere.'

CXXV.

'Gret is my wo,' quod she, and sighte soore,
As she that feleth dedely sharp distresse;
'But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more,
That love hym bet than he hymself, I gesse;
Allas, for me hath *he* swich hevynesse!
Kan he for me so pitously compleyne?
Iwis, this sorw dowbleth al my peyne.

CXXVI.

'Grevous to me, God woote, *is* for to twynne,'
Quod she, 'but yet it hardere is to me,
To sen that sorwe which that he is inne,
For wel wot I it wol my bane be,
And dye I wol in certeyn,' tho quod she.
'But bid hym come, er deth that thus me threteth,
Dryve out that gost, which in myne herte beteth.

CXXVII.

Thise wordes seyde, she on hire armes two
Fil gruf, and gan to wepen pitously:
Quod Pandarus, 'Allas, why do ye so?
Syn wel ye woote the tyme is faste by
That he shal com; aris up hastely,
That he yow nat biwepen thus ne fynde,
But ye wol have hym woode out of hys myndc.

CXXVIII.

'For wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wold hymselven sle: and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde nat com heere
For al the good that Priam may despende:
For to what fyn he wold anon pretende,
That knowe Ich wel; and forthi yet I seye,
So lef this sorwe, or, platly, he wol dye.

CXXIX.

'And shapeth yow his sorw for tabrigge,
And nought encrese, leve nece swete!
Beth rather to hym cause of flat than egge,

And with som wysdom ye his sorwe beete:
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete,
Or though ye bothe in salte terys dreynte?
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.

CXXX.

'I mene thus:—whan Iche hym hyder brynge,
Syn ye be wyse, and bothe of oon assente,
So shapeth how distourbe your goynge,
Or come ayeyn soone efter ye be wente,
Wommen ben wyse in short avysemente;
And lat sen how youre wit shal now availe,
And what that I may help, it shal not faile.'

CXXXI.

'Go,' quod Criseyde, 'and, uncle, trewely
I shal don al my myght me to restreyne
From wepynge in his sight, and bysily
Hym for to glade I shal don al my peyne,
And in myn herte seken every veyne;
If to his soor there may be founden salve,
It shal not lakke, certeyn, on myn halve.'

CXXXII.

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte,
Til in a temple he fonde hym *al* alone,
As he that of his lif no lenger roughte,
But to the pitouse goddes everychon
Ful tenderly he preyde, and made his mone,
To doon hym soon out of this worlde to pace,
For wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.

CXXXIII.

And *shortely* al the sothe for to seyne,
He was so fallen in dispaire that day,
That outrely he shope hym for to deye;
For righte thus was his argument alwey,
He seyde he nas but lorne, waylawey!
'For al that cometh, comth by necessité;
Thus to ben lorne, it is my desteyné.

CXXXIV.

'For certeynly, this woote I wel,' he sayde,
'That forsyght of devyne purvyaunce
Hathe seyn alwey me to forgon Criseyde,
Syn God seth every thynge, out of doutaunce,
And hem disponeth thorugh his ordinaunce,
In hire merites sothely for to be,
As they shul comen by predesteyné.

CXXXV.

'But natheles, allas! whom shal I leve?
For ther ben grete *clerkes* many oone,
That destyné thorwgh argumen*tez* preve;
And som m*e*n seyn that nedely ther is noon,
But that fre *cho*ys is yeven us everichon:
O waylaway! so sleighe ern clerkes olde,
That I nat whos opinion I may holde.

CXXXVI.

'For som men seyn if God seth al byforne,
Ne God may not deseyved ben pardé!
Than moot it fallen, theigh men hadde it sworne,

That purveyaunce hath seyn befor to be;
Wherfor I seye, that from eterne if he
Hathe wiste byforn our thought ek as oure dede,
We have no fre choys, as thise clerkes rede.

CXXXVII.

'For other thoughte, nor other dede also,
Myghte nevere ben, but swich as purveyaunce,
Which may nat ben deceyved nevere moo,
Hath feled byforne, withouten ignoraunce;
For if ther myghte ben a variaunce
To wrythen out fro Goddes purveyinge,
Ther nere no prescience of thynge comynge;

CXXXVIII.

'But it were rather an opinyon
Uncertein, and no stedfast forseynge;
And, certes, that were an abusyon,
That God shold han no parfit clere wetynge,
More than we men, that han douteous wenynge,
But swich an erroure upon God to gesse,
Were fals, and foule, and wikked corsednesse.

CXXXIX.

'Ek this is an opinyon of some,
That han hire top ful heigh and smothe yshore,
They seyn right thus, that thynge is nat to come,
For that the prescience hath seyne byfore
That it shal come; but they seyn that therfore
That it shal come, therfor the purveyaunce
Woot it bifore withouten ignorance.

CXL.

'And in this manere this necessité
Retourneth in his part contrarye agayn;
For nedfully byhoveth it not to be,
That thilke thynges fallen in certeyn
That ben purveyed; but nedly, as they seyne,
Bihoveth it that thynges which that falle,
That thei in certein ben purveied alle.

CXLI.

'I mene as though I labourede me in this,
To enqueren which thynge cause of whiche thynge be;
As whether that the prescience of God is
The certein cause of the necessité
Of thynges that to comen ben, pardé!
Or if necessité of thynge comynge
Be cause certein of the purveyinge.

CXLII.

'But now nenforce I me nat in shewynge,
How the ordre of causes stant; but wel woot I
That it bihoveth that the bifallynge
Of thynges wiste bifor certeinly,
Be necessarie, al seme it nat therby,
That prescience put fallynge necessaire
To thynge to come, al falle it foule or faire.

CXLIII.

'For if ther sit a man yonde on a see,
Than by necessité bihoveth it
That certes thyn opinioun soth be,

That wenest or conjectest that he sit;
And, further over, now ayeinwarde yit,
Lo right so is it on the part contrarie,
As thus, nowe herkene, for I wol nat tarie:

CXLIV.

'I sey, that if the opinion of the
Be soth for that he sit, than seye I this,
That he moot sitten by necessité;
And thus necessité in either is,
For in hym nede of sittynge is, ywis,
And in the nede of soth; and thus forsoth
Ther mot necessité ben in yow bothe.

CXLV.

'But thow maist seyne the man sit nat therfore,
That thyn opinioun of his sittynge sothe is;
But rather, for the man sat there byfore,
Therfor is thyn opinioun soth, ywys;
And I seye, though the cause of soth of this
Cometh of his sittynge, yet necessité
Is interchaunged both in hym and the.

CXLVI.

'Thus in the same wyse, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me,
My resonynge of Goddes purveiaunce,
And of the thynges that to comen be;
By which reson men may wel ysee,
That thylke thynges that in erthe falle,
That by necessité they comen alle.

CXLVII.

'For although that for thynge shal come, ywys,
Therfor it is purveyed certeynly,
Nat that it come*th* for it purveied is;
Yet natheles bihoveth it nedfully,
That thynge to come be purveied trewly,
Or elles thynges that purveied be,
That they bitiden by necessité.

CXLVIII.

'And this sufficeth right ynough certeyn,
For to distruye oure fre choys everydele.
But now is this abusioun to seyne,
That fallynge of the thynges temporel,
Is cause of goddes prescience eternel;
Now trewely that is a fals sentence,
That thynge to come sholde cause his prescience.

CXLIX.

'What myght I wene, and I hadde swich a thought,
But that God purveieth thynge that is to come,
For that *it* is to come, and elles nought?
So myght I wene that thynges alle and some,
That whilom ben bifalle and overe-come,
Ben cause of thilke soveyren purvuyaunce,
That forwoot alle, withouten ignoraunce.

CL.

'And over al this, yet seye I moore herto,—
That right as whan I woot there is o thynge,
Ywis, that thynge mot nedfully be so;

Ek right as whan I woote a thynge comynge,
So mot it come; and thus the bifallynge
Of thynges that ben wiste bifore the tyde,
They mowe not ben eschued on no syde.'

CLI.

Than seyde he thus; 'Almyghty Jove in trone,
That woost of al this thynge the sothfastnesse,
Rewe on my sorwe, or do me dyen sone,
Or brynge Criseyde and me fro this distresse.'
And while he was in al this hevynesse,
Disputynge with hymself in this matere,
Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here.

CLII.

'O myghty God,' quod Pandarus, 'in trone!
I! who say evere a wys man faren so?
Whi Troylus, what thynkestow to doon?
Hastow swich luste to ben thyn owne fo?
What! pardé, yet is nat Criseyde ago!
Why lust the so thiself fordoon for drede,
That in thyne hed thyn eyne semen dede?

CLIII.

'Hastow nought lyved many a yere byforne
Withouten hire, and ferde ful wel at ese?
Ertow for hire and for non other borne?
Hath Kynde the wroughte al oonly hire to plese?
Lat be! and thynk right thus in thy disese,
That, in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love there com and gon plesaunces.

CLIV.

'And yet this is a wonder moost of alle,
Why thow thus sorwest, syn thou nost not yit,
Touchynge hire goynge, how that it shall falle;
Ne yif she kan hire-self distourben it,
Thow hast nat yit assayed al hire wit;
A man may al by-tyme his nekke beede
Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the nede.

CLV.

'Forthi, take hede of al that I shal seye,
I have with hire ispoke, and longe ibe,
So as acorded was bytwyxe us tweye;
And evermoo me thynketh thus, that she
Hath somwhat in hire hertes previté,
Wherwith she can, if I shal right arede,
Distourbe al this, of which thow ert in drede.

CLVI.

'For which my conseil is, whan it is nyght,
Thow to hire go, and mak of this an ende;
And blisful Juno, thorwgh hire grete myghte,
Shal, as I hope, hire grace unto us sende.
Myn herte seith, *certein* she shal nat wende;
And forthi, put thyne herte a qwhile in reste,
And hold this purpos, for it is the beste.'

CLVII.

This Troilus answerde, and sighte soore,
'Thow saist right wel, and I wol doon right so;'
And what hym liste, he seyde unto *hym* moore.

And whan that it was tyme for to go,
Ful prevely hymself, withouten mo,
Unto hire come, as he was wonte to doon,
And how they wroughte I shal yow tellen soone.

CLVIII.

Soth is, than when they gonnen first to meete,
So gan the peyne hire hertes for to twyste,
That noither of hem myghte other grete,
But hem in armes tooke, and efter kyste;
The lasse woful of hem bothe nyste
Wher that he was, ne myght o word out brynge,
As I seyde arst, for wo and for sobbynge.

CLIX.

The woful teres that they leten falle
As bittre weren out of teres kynde
For peyne, as is ligne aloes, or galle,—
So bittre teres wepe noughte, as I fynde,
The woful Myrra, thorwgh the barke and rynde,—
That in this world there nys so hard an herte,
That nolde han rewed on hire peynes smerte.

CLX.

But when hire woful, wery, gostes tweyne
Retourned ben, ther as hem owen to dwelle,
And that somwhat to woken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle
Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle,
With brokyn vois, al hois for shright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde.

CLXI.

'O Jove, I deye, and mercy I biseche!
Helpe Troilus!' and therwithal hire face
Upon his breste she leyde, and lefte speche,
Hire woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the worde, alwey *in* poynte to pace;
And thus she lith, with hewes pale and grene,
That whilom fressh and fairest was to sene.

CLXII.

This Troilus that on hire gan biholde,
Clepynge hire name, and she lay as for dede,
Withouten answere, and felt her lymes colde,
Hire eyen throwen upwarde to hire hed;
This sorwful man kan now noon other rede,
But ofte tyme hire colde mouthe he kyste;
Wher hym was wo, God and hymself it wiste!

CLXIII.

He rist hym up, and longe streight he hire layde;
For signe of lyf, for ought he kan or may,
Kan he non fynde in nothynge *of* Cryseyde,
For which his songe ful oft is, 'Walaway!'
But when he saugh that specheles she lay,
With sorwful vois, and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this worlde yfare.

CLXIV.

So efter that *he* longe hadde hyre compleyned,
His hondes wronge, and seyde that was to seye,
And with his teris salt hire breest byreyned,

He gan tho teris wipen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde, 'O Lord, that *set* ert in thi trone,
Rew ek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone.'

CLXV.

She colde was, and withouten sentemente,
For aught he woot, for breth ne felt he non;
And this was hym a preignant argument,
That she was forth out of this world agone:
And when he sey ther was non other wone,
He gan hire lymes dresse, in swich manere,
As men don hem that shal be layd on beere.

CLXVI.

And efter this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerde anon out of his shethe he twyghte,
Hymself to slane, how sore that hym smerte,
So that his soule, hire soule folwen myghte,
Ther as the dome of Mynos wold it dighte;
Syn Love and cruel Fortune it ne wolde,
That in this world he langer lyven sholde.

CLXVII.

Than seyde he thus, fulfilld of heigh desdayn,
'O cruel Jove, and thow Fortune adverse,
This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn
Criseyde! and syn ye may do me no werse,
Fy on youre myght and werkes so dyverse!
Thus cowardly ye shul me nevere wynne,
Ther shal no deth me fro my lady twynne.

CLXVIII.

'For I this world, syn he have slayn hire thus,
Wol lete, and folw hire spirit low or heye;
Shal nevere lover seyn that Troilus
Dar not for *fere* with his lady dye;
For, certein, I wol bere hire companye;
But, syn ye wol not suffure us lyven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben ifeere.

CLXIX.

'And thow cité, in *which* I lyve in wo!
And thow Priam, and bretheren alle ifere!
And thow *my* moder, farwel, for I go!
And, Attropes, mak redy thow my beere!
And thow Criseyde, O swete herte deere,
Receyve now my spirit!' wolde he seye,
With swerd at herte, al redy for to dye.

CLXX.

But, as God wold, of swough she therwith brayde,
And gan to sike, and 'Troilus,' she cryede;
And he answerde, 'Lady myn Criseyde,
Lyve ye yit?' and lete his swerde down glide:
'Ye, herte myn, that thanked be Cupide!'
Quod she, and therwithal *she sore* sighte,
And he bigan to glad hire as he myghte.

CLXXI.

Took hire in armes two, and kyste hire ofte,
And hire to glade, he dide al his entente,
For which hire gooste, that fliked ay o lofte,

Into hire woful herte ayein it wente:
But, at the laste, as that hire eye glente
Asyde, anon she gan his swerde aspye,
As it lay bare, and gan for feere crie,

CLXXII.

And asked hym whi he it hadde out drawe;
And Troilus anon the cause hire tolde,
And how hymself therwith he wolde han slawe;
For which Criseyde upon hym gan byholde,
And gan hym in *hire* armes faste folde,
And seyde, 'O mercy God, lo, which a dede!
Allas! how neigh we weren bothe dede!

CLXXIII.

'Thanne if I nadde ispoken, as grace was,
Ye wold han slayn yowre-self anon?' quod she.
'Ye, douteles:' and she answarde, 'Allas!
For, by that ilke lorde that made me!
I nold a forlonge wey o lyve have be
After your deth, to han ben crowned quene
Of al that lond the sonne on shyneth sheene.

CLXXIV.

'But with this selve swerde, which that here is,
Myself I wolde han slayn,' quod she tho.
But hoo! for we han right ynowgh of this;
And lat us rise and streighte to bedde go;
And ther lat us speken of oure wo,
For by this morter, which that I se brenne,
Know I ful wel that day is not ferre henne.'

CLXXV.

When they were in hire bedde in armes folde,
Naught was it like tho nyghtes here biforn,
For pitously ich other gan byholde,
As they that hadden al hire blisse ylorn,
Bywaylynge ay the day that they were borne;
Til, at the laste, this sorwful wight Criseyde,
To Troilus this ilke wordis seyde.

CLXXVI.

'Loo! herte myne, wel woot ye this,' quod she,
'That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,
And seketh naught how holpen for to be,
It *n*is but folye, and encresse of peyne:
And sin that here assembled be we tweyne,
To fynde boote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme soone to begynne.

CLXXVII.

'I am a womman, as ful wel ye woote,
And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whil it is hoote;
Me thynketh thus, that noither ye nor I,
Ought half this wo to maken skilfully;
For ther is art ynough for to redresse
That yet is mys, and slen this hevynesse.

CLXXVIII.

'Soth is, the wo the w*h*iche that we ben inne,
For aught I wot, for nothynge elles is,
But for the cause that we sholden twynne;

Considered al, there nys no more amys:
But what is thanne a remede unto this,
But that we shape us soone for to mete?
This al and som, my dere herte *swete*!

CLXXIX.

'Now, that I shal wele bryngen it aboute
To com ayein, soon efter that I go,
Therof am I no maner thynge in doute;
For, dredeles, within a wowke or two,
I shal ben here; and that it may be so,
By al*le* righte, and in a wordes fewe,
I shal yow wel an heepe of weyes shewe.

CLXXX.

'For which I wol nat maken longe sermon,
For tyme iloste may nought recovered be,
But I wol gon to my conclusion,
And in the best, in aught that I kan see:
And, for the love of God, foryeve it me,
If I speke aught ayenis youre hertes reste;
For trewely I speke it for the beste;

CLXXXI.

'Makynge alwey a protestacioun,
That now this wordes, which that I shal seye,
Nys but to shewen yowe my mocioun,
To fynde unto oure help the beste weye,
And taketh it non otherwyse I yow preye;
For, in effect, what so ye me comaunde,
That wol I don; for *that* ys no demaunde.

CLXXXII.

'Now herkeneth this:—ye han wel understonde,
My goynge graunted is by parlement
So ferforth, that it may not be withstonde
For al this world, as by my jugement;
And syn ther helpeth non avysement
To letten it, lat it passe out of mynde,
And lat us shape a better wey to fynde.

CLXXXIII.

'The sothe *is*, the twynnynge of us tweyne
Wol us disese, and crueliche anoye:
But hym bihoveth somtyme han a peyne
That serveth love, if that he wol have joye:
And syn I shal no forther out of Troie
Than I may ride ayein on halfe a morwe,
It aughte lasse causen us to sorwe.

CLXXXIV.

'So as I shal not so ben hidde in muwe,
That day by day, myn *owen* herte deere,
Syn wel ye wot that it is now a truwe,
Ye shal ful wel al myn estate yheere:
And er that truwe is don I shal ben here,
And thanne have ye bothe Antenor ywonne,
And me also; beth glad now if ye konne.

CLXXXV.

'And thynk right thus:—Criseyde is now agon;
But *what!* she shal com hastily ayein!
And when, allas? bi God, lo! right anon

Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly seyne;
And than at erste, shal we be so feyne,
So as we shal togideres evere dwelle,
That al this worlde ne myght oure blisse telle.

CLXXXVI.

'I see that ofte tyme, ther as we bene now,
That for the beste, oure conseil for to hide,
Ye speke not with me, nor I with yowe
In fourtenyght, ne se yow go ne ride:
May ye nought ten dayes thanne abide,
For myn honour, in swich an aventure?
Iwys, ye mowe elles lite endure.

CLXXXVII.

'Ye knewe eke how that al my kyn is here,
But if that onlich it my fader be;
And *ek* myne other thynges, al ifeere,
And nameliche, my deere herte! ye,
Whom that I nolde leven for to se,
For al this world, as wyde as it hath space,
Or elles se Iche nevere Joves face!

CLXXXVIII.

'Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse
Coveiteth so to se me, but for drede,
Lest in this town that folkes me despice,
Because of hym, for his unhappi dede?
What woot my fader what lyf that I lede?
For if he wiste in Troie how wel I fare,
Us nedede for my wendynge nought care.

CLXXXIX.

'Ye seen, that every day ek mor and more,
Men trete of pees, and it supposed is
That men the queene Eleyne shal restore,
And Grekes us restoren that is mys:
So, though ther nere comfort non but this,
That men purposen pees on every syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.

CXC.

'For if that it be pees, myn herte deere,
The nature of the pees moot nedes dryve,
That men most entrecommunen yfere,
And to and fro ek ride and gon as blyve,
Al day as thykke as been fleen from an hyve;
And every wight han liberté to bleve
Whar as hym liste bet withouten leve.

CXCI.

'And though so be that pees ther may be non,
Yet hider, though ther never pees ne weere,
I moste come; for whider shold I gone?
Or how meschaunce! sholde I dwelle there
Amange the men of armes evere in feere?
For which, as wysely God my soule rede!
I kan not sen whereof ye sholden drede.

CXCII.

'Have here another wey, if it so be
That al this thynge ne may *yow* not suffise;
My fader, as ye knowen wele pardé,

Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse;
And I right now have founden al the gyse,
Withouten net, wherwith I shal hym hente;
And herkeneth how, if that ye wol assente.

CXCIII.

'Loo! Troilus, men seyne, that ful harde it is
The wolf ful, and the wether hoole to have;
This is to seyn, that men ful oft ywis,
Moot spenden part, the remenaunte for to save:
For ay with gold, men may the herte grave
Of hym that set is upon coveitise;
And how I mene, I shal it yowe devyse.

CXCIV.

'The moeble which that I have in this town,
Unto my fader shal I take and seye,
That right for truste, and for savacioun,
It sent is from a frend of his or tweye;
The whiche frendes ferventliche hym preye,
To senden efter more and that in heye,
Whil that this town stante thus in jupartye.

CXCV.

'And that shal ben of gold an huge quantité,
Thus shal I seyn, but lest it folk aspiede,
This may be sente bi no wight but by me.
I shal ek shewen hym, if pees betyde,
What frendes that Ich have on every syde,
Towarde the courte, to don the wrethe pace
Of Priamus, and don hym stonde in grace.

CXCVI.

'So what for o thynge and for other, sweete,
I shal hym so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in hevene his soul is, shal he mete;
For alle Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or kalkulynge, avayleth nought thre hawes:
Desire of gold shal so his soule blende,
That, as me liste, I shal wel make an ende.

CXCVII.

'And if he wol aught by his sorte it preve
If that I lye, in certein I shal fonde
Destourben hym, and plukke hym by the sleve,
Makynge his sort, and beren hym on honde,
He hath not wele the goddes understonde;
For goddes speken in amphibologies,
And for o soth they tellen twenty lyes.

CXCVIII.

'Ek drede fond firste goddes, *I* suppose,
Thus shal I seyn, and that his coward herte,
Made hym amys the goddes text to glose,
When he for ferde out of Delphos sterte:
And but I make hym soone to converte,
And don my rede, withinne a day or tweye,
I wol to yow oblige me to deye.'

CXCIX.

And treweliche, as writen wel I fynde,
That al this thynge was seyde in goode entent;
And that hire herte trewe was and kynde

Towardis hym, and spak right as she mente;
And that she *starf* for wo neigh whan she wente,
And was in purpos evere to be trewe;
Thus writen they that of hire werkes knewe.

CC.

Tho Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
Herde al this thynge devysen to and fro,
And veriliche it semede that he hadde
The selfe wit; but *yit* to late hire go
His herte mysforyafe hym everemo,
And finaly he gan his herte wreste
To trusten hire, and toke it for the beste.

CCI.

For which the grete furye of his penaunce
Was queynte with hope; and therewith hem bytwene
Bygan for joye thamorouse daunce;
And as the bryddes, whan the sonne is shene,
Deliten in hire songe, in leves grene,
Right so the wordes that they spak ifeere
Deliten hem, and make hire hertes chere.

CCII.

But natheles the wendynge of Criseyde,
For al this world may not out of his mynde;
For whiche ful oft he pitously hire preyde,
That of hire heste he may hire trewe fynde;
And seyde hire, 'Certes if ye be unkynde,
And but ye come, at day set, into Troye,
Ne shal I nevere have hele, honor, ne joye.

CCIII.

'For also sothe as sonne uprist o morwe,
And, *God*, so wysely thow me, woful wreche,
To reste brynge out of this cruel sorwe,
I wol my-selven sle, if that ye drecche:
But of my deth though litel be to recche,
Yet or that ye me causen so to smerte,
Dwelle rather here, myn owen swete herte.

CCIV.

'For trewely myn owene lady deere,
Tho sleightes yit that I have herde yowe steere,
Ful shapely ben to faylen alle ifeere;
For thus men seith, that oon thynketh the bere,
But al another thynketh *the* ledere;
Your sire is wis, and seyde is out of drede,
Men may the wise at-renne, and nought atrede.

CCV.

'It is ful hard to halten unespied
Bifor a crepul, for he kan the craft;
Youre fader is in sleighte as Argus eyed;
For al be *it* that his moeble is hym byraft,
His olde sleighte is yit so with hym laft,
Ye shal nat blynde hym for yowre womanhede,
Ne feyne arighte; and that is alle my drede.

CCVI.

'I not if pees shal everemo bitide;
But pees or no, for ernest ne for game,
I woot syn Calkas on the Grekes syde

Hath oones ben, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no mor com here ayein for shame;
For whiche that wey, for aught I kan espye,
To trusten on, nys but a fantasye.

CCVII.

'Ye shal ek sen your fader shal yow glose
To ben a wife, and as he kan wel preche,
He shal som Greke so preyse and wele alose,
That ravysshen he shal yow with his speche;
Or do yow don be force as he shal teche;
And Troilus, on whom ye nyl han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe.

CCVIII.

'And over al this, youre fader shal despise
Us alle, and seyn this cité nys but lorne,
And that thassege nevere shal arise,
For-why the Grekes han it alle sworne,
Tyl we be sleyne, and down our walles torn;
And thus he shal yow with his wordes feere;
That ay drede I that ye wol bleven theere.

CCIX.

Ye shal ek seen so many a lusti knyght,
Amange the Grekes, ful of worthynesse;
And ech of hem, with herte, wit, and myght,
To plesen yow don alle his bisynesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us cely Trojans, but if routhe
Remorde yow, or vertu of youre trouthe.

CCX.

'And this to me so grevous is to thynke,
That fro my breeste it wol my soule sende;
Ne, dredeles, in me ther may not synke
A goode opynyoun, if that ye wende,
For-why youre faderes sleighte wol us shende;
And if ye gon as I have told you yore,
So thynke I nam but deede, withoute more.

CCXI.

'For which with humble, trewe, and pitouse herte
A thousand tyme mercy I yow preye,
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somwhat, as that I shal yow seye:
And lat us stele awey bytwyxe us tweye,
And thynke that foly is, when man may cheese
For accident his substaunce ay to lese.

CCXII.

'I mene thus, that syn we mow or day
Wele stele awey, and ben togidere so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
(In cas ye sholden to youre fader go)
If that ye myghten com ayein or no?
Thus mene I, that were a grete folye
To putten that sykernesse in jupartye.

CCXIII.

'And vulgarly to speken of substaunce,
Of tresour may we bothe with us lede,
Inoughe to *lyve* in honour and plesaunce,

Til unto tyme that we shal be dede;
And thus we may esshuen al this drede;
For every other wey ye kan recorde,
Myn herte iwis may therwith nought acorde.

CCXIV.

'And hardily ne dredeth no poverté;
For I have kyn and frendes elles where,
That, though we comen in oure bare sherte,
Us sholde neyther lakken golde ne gere,
But ben honoured whil we dwellen there;
And go we anon, for as in myn entente,
This is the best, if that ye wol assente.'

CCXV.

Cryseyde with a syk, ryght in this wyse
Answerde, 'Iwis, my deere herte trewe,
We may wel stele awey, as ye devyse,
And fynden swich unthrifty wayes newe;
But efterward ful sore it wol us rewe,
And helpe me God so at my moste nede!
As causeles ye suffren alle this drede.

CCXVI.

'For thylke day that I for cherisynge,
Or drede of fader, or of any other wight,
Or for estat, delit, or for weddynge,
Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knyghte,
Saturnes doughter Juno, thorugh hyre myghte,
As wood as Achamante do me dwelle
Eternaliche in Stixe, the put of Helle!

CCXVII.

'And this on every god celestial
I swere it yow, and ek on ech goddesse,
On every nymphe, and deyté infernal,
On satury and fawny more and lesse,
That halve goddes ben of wildernesse;
And Attropos my thred of lif to-breste,
If I be fals, now trowe me if yow leste.

CCXVIII.

'And thow Symoys, that, as an arwe, clere
Thorugh Troye rennest ay downwarde to the se,
Ber witnesse of this word that seyde is here!
That thilke day that Ich untrewe be
To Troilus, myn owen herte fre,
That thow retourne backwarde to thy welle,
And I with body and soule synk in Helle.

CCXIX.

'But that ye spek away thus for to go,
And letten alle youre frendes,—God forbede,
For any womman that ye sholde so!
And namely, syn Troye hath now swiche nede
Of help; and ek of o thyng taketh hede,—
If this were wist, my lif lay in balaunce,
And youre honour; God shilde us fro myschaunce!

CCXX.

'And if so be that pees hereafter *be* take,
As al day happeth after anger game,
Why lord! the wo and sorwe ye wolden make,

That ye ne dorste come ayeyne for shame;
And er that *ye* juparten so youre name,
Beth nought to hastif in this hote fare,
For hastif man *ne* wanteth nevere care.

CCXXI.

'What trowe ye ek the peple alle aboute
Wold of it seye? it is ful right tarede,
They wolden seye, and swere it oute of doute,
That love ne drof yow nought to don this dede,
But lust voluptuous, and cowarde drede;
Thus were al loste, iwis, myn herte deere,
Youre honour, which that now shyneth so cleere.

CCXXII.

'And also thynketh on myn honesté,
That floureth yet, how foul I shold it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde be,
If in this fourme I sholde with yow wende,
And though I lyved unto the worldes ende,
My name shold I never ayeynwarde wynne;
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and synne.

CCXXIII.

'And forthi, sle with reson al this hete;
Men seyn, the suffraunt overcomth, pardé!
Ek whoso wol han lief, he lyfe moot leete;
Thus maketh vertu of necessité
By paciens; and thynke that lorde is he
Of fortune ay, that naught wol of hire reche,
And she ne daunteth no wight but *a* wreche.

CCXXIV.

'And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Er Phebus suster, Lucyna the shene,
The Leon passe oute of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, withouten any wene;
I mene, as help me Juno, Hevynesse quene!
The tenthe day, but if that deth messaile,
I wol you sene, withouten any fayle.'

CCXXV.

'And now, so this be soth,' quod Troilus,
'I shal wel suffre unto the tenthe day,
Syn that I se that nede it mot be thus;
But for the love of God if it be may,
So lat us stele pryvely away:
For evere in oone, as for to lyve in reste,
Myn herte seith that it wol be the beste.'

CCXXVI.

'O mercy God! what lyfe is this?' quod she,
'Allas! ye sle me thus for verray tene!
I se wel now that ye mystrusten me,
For by youre wordes it is wel iseene:
Now for the love of Cynthia the sheene,
Mystruste me naught thus causeles for routhe,
Syn to be trew I have yow plyght my trouth.

CCXXVII.

And thynketh wel, that somtyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to wynne;
Ne, pardé, lorne am I naught fro yow yit,

Though that we ben a day or tweye atwynne:
Dryfe oute the fantasies yow fro withinne,
And trusteth me, and leveth ek youre sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol nought lyve tyl morwe.

CCXXVIII.

For if ye wist how soore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde ceese of this; for God thow woste!
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte
To se yow wepen *which* that I love moost,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost;
Ye! nere it that I wiste a remedye
To com ayeyn, right here I wolde dye.

CCXXIX.

'But certes I am nought so nyce a wight,
That I ne kan ymagynen a way
To come ayeyn, that day that I have hight;
For who may holde a thynge that wol awey?
My fader naught, for al his queynte pleye;
And by my thrifte, my wendynge out of Troye,
Another day, shal *tourne* us al to joye.

CCXXX.

'Forthi with al myn herte I yow beseke,
If that yow liste don ought for my preyere,
And for that love whiche that I love yow eke,
That er that I departe fro yow here,
That of so goode a confort and a chere
I may yow sen, that ye may brynge at reste
Myn herte, whiche that is *at* poynte to breste.

CCXXXI.

'And, over alle this, I preye yow,' quod she tho,
'Myn owen herte sothfaste suffisaunce,
Syn I am thin alle hole withouten mo,
That, whil that I am absente, no plesaunce
Of other do me fro youre remembraunce;
For I am evere agast; for-why men rede,
That love is thynge ay ful of bysy drede.

CCXXXII.

'For in this worlde ther lyveth lady noon,
If that ye were untrewe, as God defende,
That so betraysed were, or wo bygon,
As I, that *alle* trouthe in yow entende:
And douteles, if that Ich other wende,
I nere but ded, and er ye cause fynde,
For Goddes love, so beth me nought unkynde.'

CCXXXIII.

'To this answerde Troilus and seyde,
'Now God, to whom ther nys no cause ywrye,
Me glad as wis I nevere unto Cryseyde,
Syn thilke day I saugh hire first with eye,
Was fals, ne never shal tyl that I deye.
At shorte wordes, wele ye may me leve,
I kan no more, it shal be founde at preve.'

CCXXXIV.

'Graunte mercy, goode myn, iwis!' quod she,
'And blisful Venus lat me nevere sterve,
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degré

To quyte hym wel, that so wele kan deserve:
And whil that God my wit wol me conserve
I shal so don; so trewe I have yow founde,
That ay honour to mewarde shal rebounde.

CCXXXV.

'For trusteth *wel* that youre estat real,
Ne veyn delite, nor oonely worthinesse
Of yow in werre or tournay marcial,
Ne pomp, array, nobley, or ek richesse,
Ne made me to rew on youre distresse,
But moral virtu, grounded upon trowthe,
That was the cause I firste hadde on yow routhe.

CCXXXVI.

'Eke gentil herte, and manhode that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde (as me thought) in despite
Every thynge that souned in-to badde,
As rudenesse, and poeplissh appetite,
And that youre reson brideled youre delite,
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was youre, and shal whil I may dure.

CCXXXVII.

'And this may length of yeres nought fordo,
Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Juppiter, that of his myght may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us grace,
Er nyghtes ten to meten in this place,
So that it may youre herte and myn suffise!
And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye rise.'

CCXXXVIII.

And after that they longe ypleyned hadde,
And ofte kyste, and streyte in armes folde,
The day gan ryse, and Troilus hym cladde,
And rewfulliche his lady gan byholde,
As he that felte dethes cares colde,
And to hire grace he gan hym recomaunde,
Wher he was wo, this holde I no demaunde;

CCXXXIX.

For mannes hed ymagynen ne kan,
Ne *ent*endement considere, ne tonge telle,
The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen every tourment down in helle;
For when he saugh that she ne myghte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
Withouten more, out of the chaumber he wente.

EXPLICIT LIBER QUARTUS.

END OF VOL. IV.

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